



**AFARS -- APPENDIX AA**

**ARMY  
SOURCE SELECTION  
MANUAL**

**May 16, 2008**

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\* This template may also be used for Source Selections that do not utilize a SSAC. In such cases, eliminate references to SSAC in these documents.

## ***SUMMARY of CHANGES***

### **AFARS – APPENDIX AA**

#### ***Army Source Selection Manual***

#### **Change 1, dated May16, 2008, includes the following –**

- o Adds additional guidance to include evaluator representation from each of the major requirement constituents on the Source Selection Evaluation Board Factors and Subfactors teams (page 6, para 3)
- o Provides new guidance for ACAT I/II Army and joint-service programs to ensure that the Source Selection Advisory Council include key stakeholder personnel at the Principal or Deputy level (page 6, para 4)
- o Adds directive that all source selection information will be marked in accordance with FAR 3.104-4(c) (page 13, para 1)
- o Adds additional justification for limiting the evaluation criteria (page 18, para 2, 4<sup>th</sup> sentence)
- o Adds new requirements to ensure that key risk have been considered by cross-walking the draft evaluation criteria against the program's risk management documentation (page 18, para 4, 4<sup>th</sup> sentence)
- o Deletes the requirement to enclose a copy of the Ethics Counselor's briefing memo and adds more specific language concerning the purpose of the Ethics Counselor's discussion and review of the financial disclosure report (H-10, para 5)

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## Purpose

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This manual contains information on source selection processes and techniques that will be used for competitive, negotiated acquisitions. As Appendix AA of the AFARS, it shall be used by all Army contracting offices conducting source selection. The manual is designed to provide flexibility within a given framework so that contracting officers can best design and execute their source selection plan/RFP to provide the optimum solution to meet their needs. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and its supplements prescribe the general policies governing these acquisitions. These documents are available on-line at <http://www.deskbook.osd.mil>. Additionally, the following resources contain policies pertaining to source selections:

- [Department of Defense Directive \(DoDD\) 5000.1](#), Defense Acquisition;
- [Department of Defense Instruction \(DoDI\) 5000.2](#), Defense Acquisition Management Policies and Procedures;
- [Defense Acquisition Guidebook to the DoD 5000 Series](#): Mandatory Procedures for Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAPs) and Major Automated Information System (MAIS) Acquisition Programs;
- Army Regulation (AR) 25-1, The Army Information Resources Management Program;
- The Defense Procurement Web site (<http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/>); and
- The Army Acquisition Web site (<https://webportal.saalt.army.mil/>)

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## Scope

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The guidance in this document applies to all competitive, negotiated acquisitions, whether conducted as formal or informal source selections, with the following exceptions:

- Contingency contracting (FM 100-10-2 and Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (AFARS) Manual No. 2 govern) and
- Architect-Engineer (A&E) contracting (FAR [Part 36](#) governs).

The extent to which you will use the processes and techniques described in this manual will depend upon the complexity and dollar value of each acquisition and your available resources. ***Apply prudent business sense to tailor the processes to fit your circumstances.***

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## Definitions

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- **Best Value** -- The expected outcome of an acquisition that, in the Government's estimation, provides the greatest overall benefit in response to the requirement.
- **Source Selection** – The process used in competitive, negotiated contracting to select the proposal that offers the best value to the Government.
- **Source Selection Authority (SSA)** – The Government official responsible for selecting the source(s) in a negotiated acquisition.
- **Formal Source Selection** – The source selection process used where someone other than the procuring contracting officer is the SSA; normally for high dollar value or complex acquisitions.
- **Tradeoff Process** – This process permits tradeoffs among cost or price and non-cost factors and allows the Government to accept other than the lowest priced proposal.
- **Lowest Priced Technically Acceptable** – A process used in competitive negotiated contracting where best value is expected to result from selection of the technically acceptable proposal with the lowest evaluated price.

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## Procurement Integrity

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***All personnel involved in the source selection process are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the procurement.***

Personnel who are involved in a source selection are subject to the requirements of the Procurement Integrity Act (See implementing regulation FAR [Part 3.104](#)). This Act and other similar statutes and regulations impose stringent requirements related to safeguarding of source selection information, contractor bid or proposal information and other integrity issues. Violation of these requirements could result in civil

and/or criminal penalties. Become familiar with the prohibitions and certification requirements of the Act and similar statutes and regulations that may pertain to your specific acquisition. Direct questions and/or issues regarding procurement integrity policy and regulations to the legal counsel assigned to the source selection.

See Appendix A for safeguards that you should consider taking to ensure the integrity of your source selection.

## CHAPTER 2: GETTING STARTED

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### *Conducting Acquisition Planning*

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#### **Acquisition planning is paramount!**

It is the process by which the Government coordinates and integrates the efforts of all personnel responsible for an acquisition through a comprehensive plan. Its purpose is to satisfy an agency's needs in the most effective, economical and timely manner and should address how the Government will manage the acquisition through all phases of the acquisition life cycle. FAR [Part 7](#) addresses policies related to acquisition planning and development of written Acquisition Plans.

Acquisition planning should start when an agency identifies a need for supplies and/or services. When practical, utilize an Integrated Product Team (IPT) approach to develop the acquisition strategy. This early teaming effort will reduce false starts and resultant delays that frequently accompany the preparation of a complex procurement.

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### *Performing Market Research*

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Market research is the first step in acquisition planning and is essential to designing an acquisition strategy and identifying candidate evaluation criteria. It is the process of collecting and analyzing information about capabilities within the market that can satisfy an agency's needs. Market research is key to determining whether a commercial item can meet the Government's needs and to identifying associated commercial practices.

Market research will significantly influence the development of the Performance Work Statement/Statement of Objectives, the selection of evaluation factors, contracting and source selection methods, and amount and type of requested proposal information.

The extent of market research and the degree to which you should document the results will vary depending on such factors as urgency, estimated dollar value, complexity, and past experience. In some cases, one person will be able to conduct all of the required market research. In other cases, a team effort will be desired. Figure 2-1 illustrates a variety of techniques that you may use in conducting market research.



**Figure 2-1**  
**Examples of Market Research Techniques**

- *Use general sources of information available from the market place, Government sources, and Internet;*
- *Contact knowledgeable individuals regarding market capabilities and business practices;*
- *Review the results of recent market research;*
- *Query Government and/or commercial data bases;*
- *Publish formal requests for information in appropriate technical or scientific journals or business publications;*
- *Conduct interchange meetings or hold presolicitation conferences;*
- *Participate in interactive, on-line communication; and*
- *Review catalogs and product literature.*

For more information on market research, see FAR [Part 10](#), which addresses related policies and procedures.

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### ***Selecting the Evaluation Methodology***

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One of the first steps in designing an acquisition strategy is to determine the most effective evaluation methodology to use. On most acquisitions, the tradeoff process will be most effective and will result in the best value to the Government. Use this process when it is in the Government's best interest to consider award to other than the lowest price offeror. Under this process, you evaluate both cost (or price) and non-cost factors and award the contract to the offeror proposing the combination of factors that represents the best value based on the evaluation criteria. Inherent in this process is the necessity to make tradeoffs considering the non-cost strengths and weaknesses, risks, and the cost (or price) offered in each proposal. The SSA will select the successful offeror by considering these tradeoffs and applying his/her business judgment to determine the proposal that represents the best value.

In the majority of acquisitions, the low priced technically acceptable (LPTA) process may not be an appropriate methodology since past performance is normally considered (See FAR [Part 15.304](#)). The Contracting Officer may waive the requirement to evaluate past performance by memorandum (with PARC approval in formal source selections). LPTAs may be used in situations where the Government would not realize any value from a proposal exceeding the Government's minimum technical requirements. In such a case, you may establish certain standards that a proposal must meet to be considered technically acceptable. The award must then be made to the lowest price, technically

acceptable offeror. In such a scenario, a proposal would not receive any additional credit for exceeding the established standards.

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## ***Establishing the Source Selection Organization (SSO)***

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- **Overview**

Source selection should be a multi-disciplined team effort. The team should include representatives from appropriate functional areas such as contracting, technical, logistics, legal, program management, and user organizations.

The success of any human endeavor is determined to a large degree by the personnel involved. Likewise, the SSA, with assistance from the PARC, will ensure the appointment of people with the requisite skills, expertise, and experience to ensure the success of the source selection. Appendix B contains personnel issues to consider when forming an SSO.

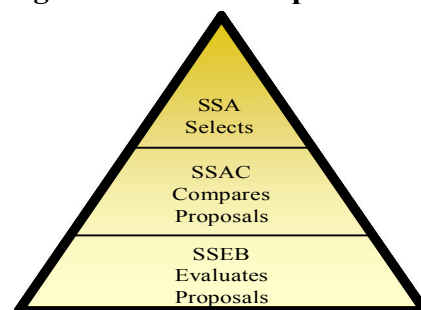
The size and composition of the SSO will vary depending upon the requirements of each acquisition. In streamlined source selections, the team will consist of one or more technical evaluators and the contracting officer, serving as the SSA. In complex source selections, you may have a distinct compartmental structure (See Fig. 2-3) consisting of individuals from various functional disciplines. Whether the team is large or small, it should be structured to ensure teamwork, unity of purpose, and appropriate open communication among the team members throughout the process. This will facilitate a comprehensive evaluation and selection of the best value proposal.

- **Key Components of the SSO**

Other than Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) designated SSAs, the Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA) or the Principal Assistants Responsible for Contracting (PARC) are responsible for the appointment of the SSAs. AFARS Part 5115.303(a) provides specific guidance on the appointment of the SSA for major defense acquisition programs, major automated information system acquisition programs, and designated Army acquisition programs. The SSA will be in the contracting chain unless the HCA or PARC approves otherwise (for their respective delegation authorities). The PARC will establish an SSA hierarchy for the organization. The PARC may deviate on a case by case basis from the established hierarchy when it is determined to be in the best interest of the procurement. SSA delegation authorities may not be redelegated. Solicitations with a dollar value in excess of \$50M will have the SSA designated at a level above the contracting officer. Solicitations for services with a dollar value in excess of \$500M will have the SSA designated by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Policy and Procurement) at the Senior Executive Service (SES) or General Officer level. All appointed SSAs are procurement officials and are subject to the statutory/regulatory rules associated therein (See Appendix A).

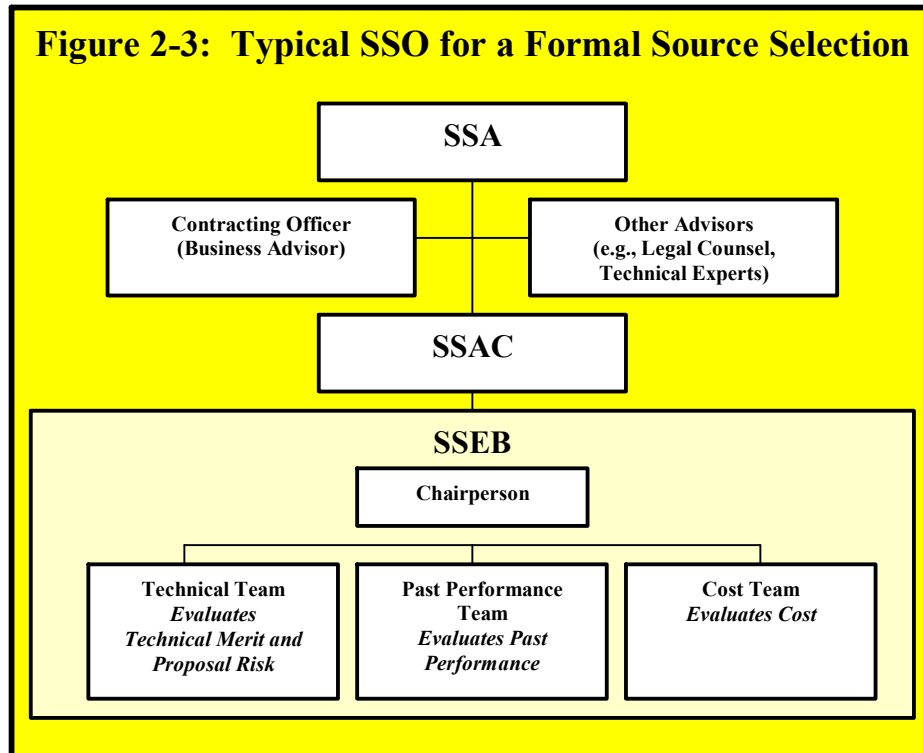
In a formal source selection, the SSO generally consists of the SSA, a Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), and a Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB).

**Figure 2-2: SSO Responsibilities**



Each of these SSO entities has distinct and compartmented functions (See Figure 2-2).

The SSEB is usually comprised of multiple groups of evaluators who are responsible for evaluating specific areas of the proposal against the RFP requirements. The precise structure of the SSEB is a matter within the SSA's discretion. Figure 2-3 illustrates a typical SSO for a complex acquisition.



In formal source selections, the contracting officer serves as a business advisor to the SSO. The contracting officer serves as the focal point for inquiries from industry, controls all exchanges with offerors (See Figure 7-1), and executes the contract award. Additionally, legal counsel, small business advisors, and technical experts may also serve as SSO advisors.

Major hardware acquisitions frequently involve requirements constituencies from across the Army (or from other services on joint-service programs). In such cases, and when forming the Source Selection Organization, SSEB Factors/Subfactor teams should include evaluator representation from each major requirements constituency. These evaluators should be assigned to the evaluation criteria associated with their specific area of requirements interest. However, they should also have access to proposal evaluation information that other SSEB teams are reviewing to determine if those factors could impact their assessment and, if they do, make the necessary adjustments. Inclusion of evaluators from key constituencies, on the SSEB, ensures that (a) the Board is populated with appropriately skilled personnel, and (b) the viewpoints of these constituencies are taken into consideration during the SSEB assessment of proposals.

On ACAT I/II Source Selections involving requirements constituencies from across the Army (or from other services on joint-service programs), the SSAC must include representation from all significant requirements organizations, and the SSAC representatives must be at the Principal or Deputy level from the key stakeholder organization(s).

- ***Roles and Responsibilities of SSO Members***

1. Source Selection Authority. The SSA shall:

NOTE: The identity of the SSA shall be considered procurement sensitive and shall not be disclosed to anyone who has not signed a non-disclosure statement for that solicitation.

- Ensure the proper conduct of the source selection process and make the final source selection decision.
- Ensure that the Source Selection Plan (SSP) and evaluation criteria are consistent with the requirements of the solicitation and applicable regulations.
- Concur with the contracting officer's decision to release the solicitation.
- Establish the SSO and approve the source selection/evaluation plan.
- Ensure that personnel with the requisite skills, expertise, and experience to execute the SSP are appointed to the SSEB and SSAC.
- Approve the contracting officer's competitive range determination.
- Ensure that conflicts of interest, or the appearance thereof, are avoided.
- Ensure that premature or unauthorized disclosure of source selection information is avoided.
- Ensure that the source selection process is conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Select the successful offeror and ensure that supporting rationale is documented in Source Selection Decision Document before contract award.

2. Source Selection Advisory Council. The SSAC shall, at a minimum:

- Review and approve the evaluation criteria prior to their approval by the SSA.
- Approve membership of the SSEB.
- Ensure that appropriate actions are taken consistent with the FAR to obtain competition in the selection process.
- Review the solicitation and recommend that the SSA authorize release.
- Monitor the SSEB and provide guidance as necessary.
- Provide briefings to the SSA, as required, on the progress of the evaluation process.

- g. As required, meet with and discuss evaluation findings with appropriate members.
- h. After the initial, and any subsequent evaluation by the SSEB, validate the strengths, weaknesses and deficiencies prior to or concurrent with the SSA approving a competitive range determination.
- i. In conjunction with the SSA, meet, at a minimum, to determine that meaningful discussions are concluded prior to the Request for Final Proposal Revisions.
- j. Identify discriminating factors amongst offerors to aid the SSA in the selection process.
- k. Review the source selection decision document for the SSA's signature, if requested by the SSA.

3. Source Selection Evaluation Board. The SSEB will:

- a. Conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of proposals against the solicitation requirements and the approved evaluation criteria.
- b. Prepare and submit the SSEB evaluation reports to the SSAC/SSA.
- c. Brief the SSAC/SSA, as requested.
- d. Respond to special instructions from the SSAC/SSA.
- e. Prepare the necessary items for negotiation.
- f. Provide information for debriefings of unsuccessful offerors.

4. Procuring Contracting Officer. The contracting officer will:

- a. Act as the business advisor to the SSEB.
- b. Act as the point of contact between the Government and the offerors. Conduct such negotiations as necessary.
- c. Determine, with the SSA's approval, which offerors are within the competitive range.
- d. Award the contract.
- e. Chair all required debriefings.

• ***Composition of the Organizational Elements.***

- 1. The SSAC will consist of senior Government personnel including a person from the cognizant contracting office to advise the SSAC.

2. The SSEB will consist of a Chairperson, and as necessary, a Deputy Chairperson, Factor Chairpersons, Subfactor Chairpersons, and teams of evaluators.

a. SSEB Chairperson - The SSEB Chairperson is required to review all aspects of all proposals, and shall fully participate in all ratings and prepare the written position of the SSEB. The SSEB Chairperson is responsible for the conduct of a comprehensive and integrated evaluation of competitive proposals in an impartial and equitable manner, and the production of summary facts and findings required in the conduct of the source selection process. The SSEB Chairperson is also responsible for the following:

(i) Assure that the SSEB members understand the criteria for the evaluation of proposals so that there is a uniformity of approach in the rating effort.

(ii) Be responsive to the guidance and special instructions of the SSAC/SSA.

(iii) Provide such briefings and consultations as may be required by the SSAC/SSA.

(iv) Assure the adequacy and overall quality of the narrative justification for the evaluation results.

(v) Assemble a team of competent individuals for assignment to the board.

(vi) Select and assign the Factor Chairpersons as required.

(vii) Require the assigned members' attendance at the meetings and conferences of the board and assign work necessary for the accomplishment of its mission.

(viii) Relieve members from assignment in the event of a demonstrated emergency or other cause.

(ix) Require members to work overtime, when necessary.

(x) Assure the safeguarding of sensitive information used by the board.

(xi) Arrange for the needed secretarial staff at the work site.

(xii) Plan the security requirements of the board and the work site and ensure their accomplishment when the board is convened.

(xiii) Establish the agenda and the schedule for SSEB meetings.

(xiv) Isolate policy issues and major questions requiring decision by the SSA.

(xv) Ensure preparation of needed documentation to support evaluation findings.

(xvi) Transmit appropriate SSEB records to the contracting officer.

(xvii) Seek to build consensus among the SSEB members.

b. SSEB Evaluators. The SSEB evaluators will consist of Factor Chairpersons supported by teams of evaluators. Each SSEB Factor Chairperson is responsible for management and administration of the evaluation and its timely completion. The teams of evaluators will support the Factor Chairpersons in the completion of the evaluation. These evaluators will be assigned to factor committees and may further be divided into subcommittees to evaluate the different sub-factors of each factor. Individuals may be assigned to serve on more than one committee based on their expertise and the need to assure that all sections are fully evaluated. Each committee will evaluate one or more sub-factors and provide summary reports for the Factor Chairperson. Each Factor Chairperson is responsible to the SSEB Chairperson for the proper evaluation of each proposal in his/her assigned factor. Each Factor Chairperson will provide recommended factor and sub-factor ratings (supported by narrative analysis) to the SSEB Chairperson.

- ***Administrative Support Considerations***

A successful source selection requires careful planning of the administrative requirements needed to support the SSO. Each acquisition will vary in terms of the administrative support requirements; however, Figure 2-4 contains a checklist of some important requirements common to many acquisitions.

**Figure 2-4**  
**Administrative Support Considerations**

- *Adequate facilities (to include space for the evaluators and related meetings and for discussions with offerors): Consider whether the facilities are of an adequate size, capable of segregation of committees, comfortable, properly furnished, secure, disabled accessible, and close to support services such as copiers, restrooms, and eating facilities.*
- *Security controls, such as identification badges and access control*
- *Secure storage space for proposals and source selection materials*
- *Appropriate computer hardware and software and related support*
- *Adequate telephones, facsimile machines, copiers and/or printing services located in secure areas and Audio/ Video Teleconferencing capabilities that can be secured.*
- *Adequate office supplies*
- *Lodging and transportation for personnel on temporary duty (TDY).*



## CHAPTER 3: SOURCE SELECTION PLAN (SSP)

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### ***Purpose***

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The Source Selection Plan (SSP) is a required and vital planning document that identifies the goals of the acquisition and describes how to evaluate proposals and select the winning offeror(s).

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### ***Format***

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Use prudent business judgment to tailor the size and detail of your SSP based upon the complexity of the acquisition. At a minimum, it should include:

- A description of what you are buying;
- Goals of the acquisition;
- A description of the SSO and the duties and responsibilities of each of the key components;
- Planned presolicitation activities (e.g., issuance of a draft solicitation, conduct of presolicitation and/or preproposal conferences, sources sought synopsis, etc.);
- The proposed acquisition strategy, including explanation of the contract type and whether multiple awards are anticipated;
- The proposed evaluation factors and subfactors, their relative importance, and associated standards (Section M);
- Solicitation/Proposal requirements (Section L);
- Definitions (ratings, strengths, etc.);
- Forms (Evaluation and IFN format, etc);
- Source Selection Participation Agreement and Standards of Conduct;
- The proposed evaluation methodology and any proposed innovative techniques; and
- The source selection milestones occurring between receipt of proposals and signing the contract.

**NOTE:** See Appendix H for a Sample Source Selection Plan which includes samples of the following:

- Members of and Advisors to the Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC) and the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB)
- Source Selection Participation Agreement
- Evaluation Form
- Item for Negotiation (IFN) Form

- Item for Negotiation (IFN) Evaluation Form

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### ***Access to the Plan***

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The plan is source selection information, as defined by FAR [Part 2.101](#). You will not disclose source selection information to any person not authorized to receive the information. Normally, only SSO members and personnel from the responsible contracting activity with a need to know are authorized access to the plan. The SSA must approve access to anyone outside the SSO and the recipient(s) must sign a non-disclosure agreement. All source selection information will be marked in accordance with FAR 3.104-4(c).

However, the evaluation factors and significant subfactors and their relative importance will eventually become public knowledge, as they become part of the solicitation. The contracting officer will put them, exactly as they appear in the SSP, into Section M (or its equivalent) of the solicitation.

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### ***Source Selection for Services***

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Generating the SSP for a Services type Source Selection offers some unique challenges to organizations and to the SSO conducting the evaluation. Normally, Past Performance is a major Factor in the evaluation of Services and usually ranks as the first or second heaviest weighted Factor. As with all source selections, organizations should take great care in providing qualified personnel to the SSO, knowledgeable in the types of services being acquired.

Sample Tasks (See Appendix H for an example of a Sample Task) are a very effective tool in the evaluation of services. However, care must be taken to draft the sample tasks as closely to the types of services being acquired as possible and to limit the evaluation criteria to essential areas. This will permit a more focused evaluation of the offeror's proposed solution to the sample task. Source Selection judgment is critical on services buys as there are arguably many more nuances on services buys than with hardware (supplies and weapon systems) actions.

## CHAPTER 4: THE SOLICITATION

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### **Purpose**

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The Government solicits proposals from potential offerors through the issuance of a solicitation. In negotiated procurements, this document is called a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP includes information necessary for the offerors to understand what the Government is buying, what information they must provide, and how their proposals will be evaluated.

*The success of an acquisition is directly linked to the quality of the RFP.*

*A well-written RFP will:*

- *facilitate a fair competition,*
- *limit criteria to discriminators that add value,*
- *clearly detail information required by the offerors*
- *clearly identify the evaluation and award criteria,,*
- *preserve the offerors' flexibility to propose innovative solutions,*
- *convey a clear understanding of the Government's requirements,*
- *specify areas where the offerors can make technical and cost tradeoffs in their proposals.*

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### **Format**

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The format of the RFP will vary depending upon whether you are buying commercial items subject to FAR [Part 12](#) or other supplies/services. Most other acquisitions use the Uniform Contract Format described at FAR [Part 15](#). For construction and architect engineering contracts see FAR [Part 36](#). Each of these formats consists of a number of sections. Each section addresses a different topic, e.g., description of the supplies/services, inspection and acceptance, delivery or performance requirements, contract administration, instructions to offerors, standard provisions and clauses, and evaluation factors.


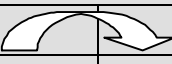

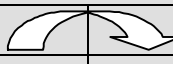
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### **Common Problems with the RFP Process**

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- ***Inconsistency among the RFP and Related Documents*** -- It is critical that there be alignment between the RFP and related documents. It is particularly important that there be consistency between the SSP and the RFP. Figure 4-1 illustrates how the key documents and evaluation standards track to one another and shows the recommended sequencing for document preparation.

**Figure 4-1**  
**Sample Tracking of Typical Acquisition Documents**

WBS	SPECIFICATION AND PWS		EVALUATION FACTORS, SUBFACTORS AND SUBMISSION INFO	
				
WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE	SPECIFICATION	PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT (PWS)	PROPOSAL EVALUATION INFORMATION Factor - Technical Subfactor - Software Modification Approach	PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION
3.1 Systems Engineering  3.1.1 Software Engineering  3.1.1.1 Software Modification  3.1.1.2 Code  3.1.1.3 Software Documentation	Software code shall meet the computer software design and coding requirements as defined in International Standards Organization (ISO) 9000-3.	3.1.1. The contractor shall modify, integrate and test software as specified in the system specification.  3.1.1.3 The contractor shall prepare a software modification plan.	The offeror's software modification approach will be evaluated relative to the modified software's ability to accommodate open architecture, tracking accuracy, and reliability.	The offeror will describe its approach to software modification and explain how the software will accommodate open architecture, conforms to ISO-9000-3, tracks accurately, and maintains reliability.

- **Inconsistency Within the RFP** -- Particularly troublesome are inconsistencies between the descriptions of the Government's requirements, instructions on how to prepare a proposal, and information related to the evaluation factors and subfactors. These inconsistencies may be caused by different groups of people developing the different RFP sections without proper coordination. Such inconsistencies can result in less advantageous offers, necessitate changes to the RFP, cause delays in the acquisition, lead to offerors losing confidence in the process, or result in litigation.
- **Requesting Too Much Information from the Offerors** -- The instructions for preparing and submitting proposals are critical to an acquisition. There has to be a link between solicitation requirements and objectives, each evaluation factor and subfactor and the proposal preparation instructions. Request only the essential information needed to evaluate proposals against the evaluation factors and subfactors. Never ask for information you do not intend to evaluate. Instructions that require voluminous information can cause potential offerors to forego responding to the solicitation in favor of a less costly business opportunity. Furthermore, excessively large proposals may increase the time and costs associated with performing the evaluation. Proposal page limitations are encouraged, but need to be clearly defined and tailored to the needs of the acquisition (See Appendix H). Focus exclusively on discriminators. Failure to do so compromises the ability to identify the best value proposal.
- **Unnecessary Use of Design Requirements** -- The way you present the Government's requirements in the RFP can have a significant impact on a source selection using the tradeoff process. Use of detailed design requirements or overly prescriptive performance work statements severely limits the offerors' flexibility to propose their best solutions. Instead, you should use

functional or performance-based requirements to the maximum extent practicable. While it may be more difficult to develop evaluation criteria and conduct the evaluation process using this approach, the benefits warrant it. These benefits include increased competition, access to the best commercial technology, better technical solutions, and fewer situations for protests.

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### ***Ways to Improve the RFP Process***

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- A multi-disciplined team should develop the RFP. The members should be stakeholders in the acquisition and should continuously coordinate with each other to ensure consistency of the document.
- Promote understanding of the Government's requirements through presolicitation exchanges with industry (See FAR [Part 15.201](#)). This can be accomplished through use of various communication forums such as Federal Business Opportunities Page notices, Advance Planning Briefings for Industry, one-on-one meetings with potential offerors, and/or presolicitation conferences. All presolicitation exchanges and drafts must be posted to the Army Single Face to Industry web site (<http://acquisition.army.mil>).
- Use a draft RFP and encourage prospective offerors to review and comment upon all elements of the acquisition, propose methods to reduce proposal and contract costs, and provide feedback on the proposed pricing arrangement and on technical requirements, i.e., too restrictive or too developmental.
- Information technology facilitates distribution of the RFP and associated presolicitation documents.
- You may find it beneficial to develop a matrix that correlates the RFP sections and content to ensure consistency. Provide industry with a copy of the matrix (make it part of the solicitation) as a reference tool to aid in proposal preparation. This approach promotes understanding of the linkage within the solicitation and explains how all parts of the proposal will be used in the evaluation process.
- Provide specific guidance to offerors regarding the structure of their proposals. This type of guidance is put into Section L (or equivalent) of the RFP. The proposal should be divided into distinct volumes or files. These volumes/files should correlate to each of the evaluation teams (e.g., technical, cost (or price), past performance, etc.). You should also prescribe how each volume/file is to be structured. These practices will facilitate distributing the proposal material to the various teams and will make it easier for evaluators to locate specific information in the proposals.
- Maximize the use of appropriate contractual incentives to ensure the resultant contract(s) represents an effective business relationship.
- Depending on your requirements, you may find it beneficial to use oral presentations (See Appendix C).

# CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION FACTORS AND SUBFACTORS, WEIGHTS, AND ADJECTIVAL RATINGS.

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## ***Evaluation Factors and Subfactors***

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- **Overview**

***Factors and subfactors must:***

- ***Be definable and measurable in readily understood quantitative and/or qualitative terms,***
- ***Represent the key areas of importance and emphasis to be considered in the source selection decision, and***
- ***Be limited to the essential elements that will enable you to distinguish among the proposals; i.e., will be true discriminators.***

You must place the evaluation factors and subfactors from the SSP into Section M (or equivalent) of the RFP. You will use the factors and subfactors to select the proposal that represents the best value to the Government. The factors and sub-factors give the offerors insight into the significant considerations that you will use in selecting the best value proposal and help them to understand the source selection process.

decision in the evaluation process. Structure the evaluation factors and subfactors and their relative importance to clearly reflect the needs of your acquisition. Base them on user requirements, acquisition objectives, perceived risks and market research/analysis.

Selecting the correct evaluation factors and subfactors is the most important

- **Mandatory Evaluation Considerations**

In every source selection, you must evaluate cost (or price) and the quality of the proposed product or service. Additionally, you must evaluate past performance on all negotiated competitive acquisitions expected to exceed the thresholds identified in FAR [Part 15.304](#), unless the contracting officer documents why it would not be appropriate (See Appendix D). The contracting officer's belief that all past performance ratings will be the same shall not be the basis for this exception. There may be other required evaluation factors, such as socioeconomic factors (including small business considerations), based upon regulatory and/or statutory requirements (See FAR [Part 15.304](#) and its supplements). From this point, apply prudent business judgment to add other evaluation factors, subfactors and elements that are important to

***You may address the quality of the product or service through one or more non-cost evaluation factors; e.g.:***

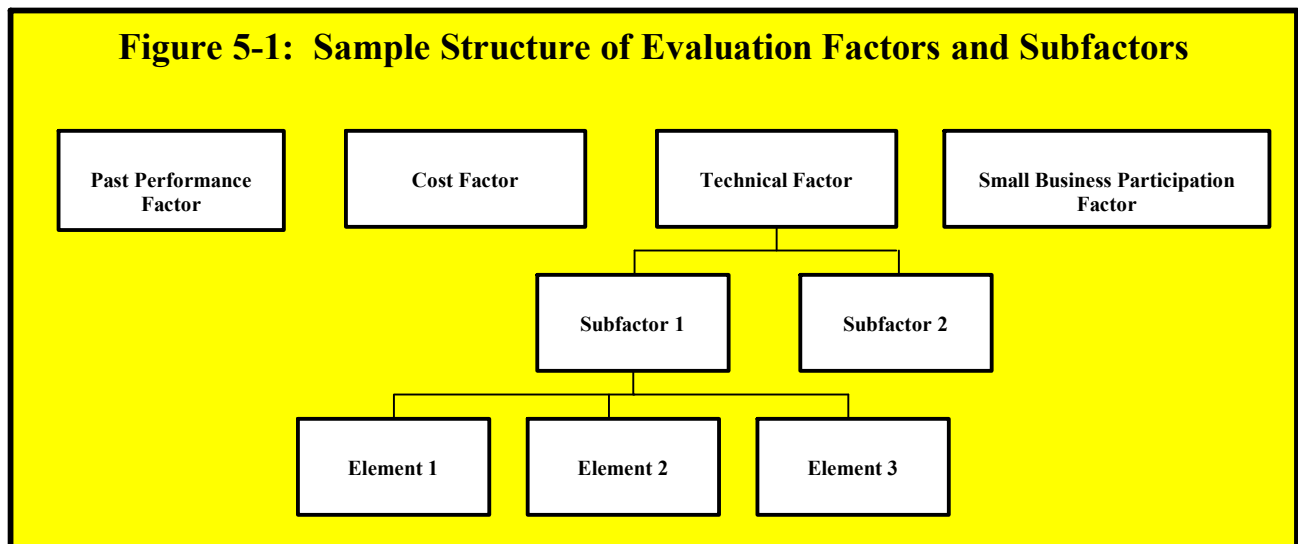
- ***past performance,***
- ***technical excellence,***
- ***management capability,***
- ***personnel qualifications.***

selecting the most advantageous proposal(s). You have broad discretion in determining these other factors, subfactors and elements and their relative importance. The number of factors and subfactors should be kept to the absolute minimum required to effectively assess the proposals.

Remember that not everything that an offeror will have to provide or perform under the contract is a discriminator in selecting the best value proposal. It is of utmost importance to limit the evaluation factors and subfactors to those that warrant a comparative evaluation in a particular area. Adding nondiscriminators will dilute the importance of the true discriminators, make proposal preparation more burdensome, require more evaluators, and increase the evaluation time. Limiting criteria also serves to reduce the evaluation oversight span-of-control responsibilities of the SSEB leadership, SSA/SSAC, PCO and legal staff, thereby permitting more focused oversight on the remaining (and most important) Factors/Subfactors and reducing the likelihood of protestable evaluation errors.

- **Structure of Evaluation Factors**

Common evaluation factors are cost (or price), technical, past performance, and small business participation. Additionally, as appropriate, you may have other evaluation factors and/or may use one or more levels of subfactors. The standard Army naming convention for the various levels is: Evaluation Factor – Subfactor – and Element. Figure 5-1 illustrates a sample evaluation factor structure. *Use caution when subdividing factors into multiple levels of subfactors since it diminishes the importance of any one aspect of the factor.*



- **Developing Evaluation Factors and Subfactors**

As practical, use a multidisciplined team to develop the evaluation factors and any appropriate subfactors. The team should choose the factors and subfactors based on user requirements, acquisition objectives, perceived risks, and thorough market research. Figure 5-2 illustrates the steps involved in developing the factors and subfactors. Before finalizing the evaluation criteria on major hardware acquisitions, a multi-disciplined team must crosswalk the draft criteria against the program's Risk Management documentation to ensure that the evaluation criteria development process has appropriately considered the program's key risks.

Figure 5-2

### Steps Involved in Formulating Evaluation Factors and Subfactors

- *Conduct market research as a starting point for development of criteria in order to maximize competition.*
- *Brainstorm critical factors and subfactors.*
- *Identify key discriminators.*
- *Define the discriminators as evaluation factors and subfactors and their relative order of importance.*
- *Get SSA approval of the list of factors and subfactors.*
- *When a draft RFP is used, clearly inform offerors in the draft RFP of the proposed factors and subfactors and their relative importance.*
  - *Assess feedback during presolicitation exchanges.*
  - *Get SSA approval as necessary to change the factors and subfactors before issuing the RFP.*
- *Clearly inform offerors of the factors and subfactors and their relative importance in the formal RFP. Do not change the factors and subfactors after issuance of the RFP except in extreme circumstances and only then after obtaining the SSA's approval and amending the RFP and SSP.*

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### Evaluation Weights

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When using the tradeoff process, you must assign relative importance to each evaluation factor and subfactor. Tailor the relative importance to your specific requirements.

**Figure 5-3**  
**Sample Priority Statement**

*Technical is the most important factor and is more important than all of the remaining factors combined. Technical is significantly more important than Past Performance. The Past Performance Factor is more important than the Cost Factor and the Small Business Participation Factor combined. The Cost Factor is more important than the Small Business Participation Factor.*

Use priority statements to express the relative importance of the evaluation factors and subfactors. Priority statements relate one evaluation factor (or subfactor) to each of the other evaluation factors (or subfactors). Figure 5-3 contains a sample priority statement. Numerical weighting; i.e., assigning points or percentages to the evaluation factors and subfactors, is NOT an authorized method of expressing the relative importance of evaluation factors and subfactors (See AFARS [Part 5115.304\(b\)\(2\)\(iv\)](#)).



Additionally, in accordance with FAR [Part 15.304\(e\)](#), you must identify in the RFP whether all evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are –

- Significantly more important than cost or price,
- Approximately equal to cost or price, or
- Significantly less important than cost or price.

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## ***Adjectival Ratings***

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- ***Overview***

When using the tradeoff process, you evaluate the non-cost portion(s) of the proposal and associated performance and proposal risks using adjectival ratings. These adjectival ratings must be included in the SSP and may consist of words, colors, or other indicators, with the exception of numbers. **The success of an evaluation is not so much dependent upon the type(s) of adjectival ratings used, but rather the consistency with which the evaluators use them.** For this reason, the adjectival ratings must include definitions for each rating so that the evaluators have a common understanding of how to apply them.

- ***Adjectival Ratings –***

You must develop adjectival ratings for the evaluators to use to assess the merit of the proposals with respect to the evaluation factors and subfactors. On some acquisitions, you may need multiple adjectival ratings to accommodate the different evaluation factors. See sample adjectival ratings in Figure 5-4. For past performance adjectival ratings see Figure 5-5 and for Small Business Participation Plan adjectival ratings see Figure 5-6 on the following pages. **Note:** For Large Businesses, Subcontracting plans, required by FAR Part [52.219-9](#), need to be consistent with this SBPP.

For illustration purposes, these samples display two different rating schemes (adjectival and color coded) and the associated definitions. An actual adjectival rating need only use one scheme. Adjectival ratings include narrative statements that address Strengths, Weaknesses, Risks, and Deficiencies. Some or all of the adjectival ratings can be used.

**NOTE:** In accordance with AFARS [Part 5115-304\(b\)\(2\)\(iv\)](#), numerical weightings (i.e., assigning points or percentages to evaluation factors and subfactors) is not an authorized method of expressing the relative importance of these factors and subfactors and is prohibited in evaluating proposals in the Army.

When evaluating the merit of a proposal, incorporate the assessment of proposal risks into the ratings.

**Figure 5-4**  
**Sample Adjectival Rating Schemes**

ADJECTIVAL	COLOR	DEFINITION
Outstanding	Blue	A proposal that satisfies all of the Government's requirements with extensive detail to indicate feasibility of the approach and shows a thorough understanding of the problems and offers numerous significant strengths, which are not offset by weaknesses, with an overall low degree of risk in meeting the Government's requirements.
Good	Green	A proposal that satisfies all of the Government's requirements with adequate detail to indicate feasibility of the approach and shows an understanding of the problems and offers some significant strengths or numerous minor strengths, which are not offset by weaknesses, with an overall low to moderate degree of risk in meeting the Government's requirements.
Acceptable	Yellow	A proposal that satisfies all of the Government's requirements with minimal detail to indicate feasibility of the approach and shows a minimal understanding of the problems, with an overall moderate to high degree of risk in meeting the Government's requirements.
Marginal	Orange	A proposal that satisfies all of the Government's requirements with minimum detail to indicate feasibility of approach and shows a minimal understanding of the problem with an overall high degree of risk in meeting the Government's requirement.
Susceptible to Being Made Acceptable	Pink	<p>An approach which, as initially proposed, cannot be rated Marginal because of a minor error(s), omission(s) or deficiency(ies) which is capable of being corrected without a major rewrite or revision of the proposal.</p> <p>NOTE: A Susceptible rating cannot be a final rating. The final rating will either increase to a rating of Marginal or better or decrease to Unacceptable.</p>
Unacceptable	Red	A proposal that contains a major error(s), omission(s) or deficiency(ies) that indicates a lack of understanding of the problems or an approach that cannot be expected to meet requirements or involves a very high risk; and none of these conditions can be corrected without a major rewrite or revision of the proposal.

<b>ADJECTIVE</b>	<b>DEFINITION AND CRITERIA</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	<p>The proposal has exceptional merit and reflects an excellent approach which will clearly result in the superior attainment of all requirements and objectives. This clearly achievable approach includes numerous advantageous characteristics of substance, and essentially no disadvantages, which can be expected to result in outstanding performance. The risk of unsuccessful performance is very low as the proposal provides solutions which are unquestionably feasible and practical. These solutions are further considered very low risk in that they are exceptionally clear and precise, fully supported, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements.</p> <p><b><i>Risk Level: Very Low</i></b></p>
<b>Good</b>	<p>The proposal demonstrates a sound approach which is expected to meet all requirements and objectives. This sound approach includes advantageous characteristics of substance, and few relatively minor disadvantages, which collectively can be expected to result in satisfactory performance. The risk of unsuccessful performance is low as the proposal contains solutions which are considered feasible and practical. These solutions are further considered to reflect low risk in that they are clear and precise, supported, and demonstrate an understanding of the requirements.</p> <p align="right"><b><i>Risk Level: Low</i></b></p>
<b>Acceptable</b>	<p>The proposal demonstrates an approach which is capable of meeting all requirements and objectives. The approach includes both advantageous and disadvantageous characteristics of substance, where the advantages are not outweighed by the disadvantages. Collectively, the advantages and disadvantages are likely to result in acceptable performance. The risk of unsuccessful performance is moderate, as the proposal solutions are generally feasible and practical. These solutions are further considered to reflect moderate risk in that they are somewhat clear and precise, partially supported, and demonstrate a general understanding of the requirements.</p> <p><b><i>Risk Level: Moderate</i></b></p>
<b>Marginal</b>	<p>The proposal demonstrates an approach which may not be capable of meeting all requirements and objectives. The approach has disadvantages of substance and advantages, which if they exist, are outweighed by the disadvantages. Collectively, the advantages and disadvantages are not likely to result in satisfactory performance. The risk of unsuccessful performance is high as the proposal contains solutions which may not be feasible and practical. These solutions are further considered to reflect high risk in that they lack clarity and precision, are generally unsupported, and do not demonstrate a complete understanding of the requirements.</p> <p align="right"><b><i>Risk Level: High</i></b></p>
<b>Susceptible to Being Made Acceptable</b>	<p>The proposal demonstrates an approach which, as initially proposed, cannot be rated Marginal because of error(s), omission(s) or deficiency(ies) which are capable of being corrected without a major rewrite or revision of the proposal. These solutions are further considered to reflect high to very high risk in that they lack clarity and precision, are generally unsupported, and do not demonstrate a complete understanding of the requirements.</p> <p align="right"><b><i>Risk Level: High to Very High</i></b></p> <p><b>NOTE: A Susceptible rating cannot be a final rating. The final rating will either increase to a rating of Marginal or better or decrease to Unacceptable</b></p>
<b>Unacceptable</b>	<p>The proposal demonstrates an approach which, based on a very high risk, will very likely not be capable of meeting all requirements and objectives. This approach has numerous disadvantages of substance, and advantages which, if they exist, are far outweighed by disadvantages. Collectively, the advantages and disadvantages will not result in satisfactory performance. The risk of unsuccessful performance is very high as the proposal contains solutions which are not feasible and practical. The solutions are further considered to reflect very high risk in that they lack any clarity or precision, are unsupported, and do not demonstrate an understanding of the requirement.</p> <p align="right"><b><i>Risk Level: Very High</i></b></p>

- **Performance Risk Adjectival ratings**

Performance Risk is something that both the Government and the offerors want to keep at a level that is appropriate for the given acquisition.

Past Performance Adjectival ratings -- Past performance analysis provides insight into an offeror's probability of successfully completing the solicitation requirements based on the offeror's performance record on similar contract efforts. You will assess this risk through evaluation of the offeror's past performance (See Appendix D).

5-5 illustrates an example of this type of adjectival rating.

**Figure 5-5**  
**Sample Past Performance Adjectival Rating Schemes**

ADJECTIVAL	COLOR	DESCRIPTION
Low Risk	Blue	Little doubt exists, based on the Offeror's performance record, that the Offeror can perform the proposed effort.
Moderate Risk	Green	Some doubt exists, based on the Offeror's performance record, that the Offeror can perform the proposed effort.
High Risk	Red	Significant doubt exists, based on the Offeror's performance record, that the Offeror can perform the proposed effort.
Unknown Risk	Gray	Little or no relevant performance record identifiable; equates to an unknown risk rating having no positive or negative evaluation significance.

Excellent	Essentially <u>no doubt</u> exists that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort based on their performance record. Risk Level: Very Low
Good	<u>Little doubt</u> exists that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort based on their performance record. Risk Level: Low
Adequate	<u>Some doubt</u> exists that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort based on their performance record. Risk Level: Moderate
Marginal	<u>Significant doubt</u> exists that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort based on their performance record. Risk Level: High
Poor	It is <u>extremely doubtful</u> that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort based on their performance record. Risk Level: Very High
Unknown	The offeror has little/no relevant past performance upon which to base a meaningful performance risk prediction. Risk Level:

	<b>Unknown</b>
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## Definitions

**Proposal Risk** - Proposal risks are those risks associated with the likelihood that an offeror's proposed approach will meet the requirements of the solicitation.

**Performance Risk** - Performance risks are those risks associated with an offeror's likelihood of success in performing the solicitation's requirements as indicated by that offeror's record of current or past performance.

**Figure 5-6**  
**Sample Small Business Participation Plan (SBPP) Adjectival Ratings**

Adjectival Rating	EVALUATION CRITERIA				
	Extent of Achievement of RFP Small Business Participation Objectives	Extent to which SBP Goal Rationale Supports Achievement of Successful Overall Contract Performance	Extent to which Corporate/Division SB Participation Goals Satisfy RFP Objectives	Realism of Proposed SB Participation Goals Based on Proposal & Performance Risk	Strengths and Weaknesses
<b>Outstanding</b>	Proposed Goals Achieve or Nearly Achieve Almost all RFP Objectives	Extensive & Compelling Rationale for All Proposed Goals	Goals Achieve or Nearly Achieve Almost all RFP Objectives	Highly Realistic	Strengths Far Outweigh Weaknesses
<b>Good</b>	Proposed Goals Achieve or Nearly Achieve Most RFP Objectives, with Meaningful Goals Against Remaining Objectives	Substantive Rationale for Almost All Proposed Goals	Goals Achieve or Nearly Achieve Most RFP Objectives, with Meaningful Goals Against Remaining Objectives	Realistic	Strengths Outweigh Weaknesses
<b>Acceptable</b>	Meaningful Goals Proposed Against Almost all RFP Objectives	Reasonable Rationale for the Majority of Proposed Goals	Meaningful Goals Against Almost all RFP Objectives	Somewhat Realistic	Strengths and Weaknesses Are Offsetting
<b>Marginal</b>	Meaningful Goals Proposed Against Only Several RFP Objectives	Limited Rationale for the Majority of Proposed Goals	Meaningful Goals Against Only Several RFP Objectives	May not be Realistic	Weaknesses Outweigh Strengths
<b>Susceptible to Being Made Acceptable</b>	<p>An Approach which, as Initially Proposed, Cannot be Rated Marginal Because of a Minor Error(s), Omission(s) or Deficiency(ies) which is/are Capable of Being Corrected Without a Major Rewrite or Revision of the Proposal.</p> <p><b>Note: A Susceptible Rating Can Only be Applied Prior to Establishment of a Competitive Range. It Cannot be a Final Rating. The Final Rating will either Increase to a Rating of Marginal or Better, or Decreases to a Rating of Unacceptable.</b></p>				
<b>Unacceptable</b>	Failed to Propose Meaningful Goals Against Almost All RFP Objectives	Little or No Meaningful Rationale Provided for Proposed Goals	Goals Fail to Satisfy Almost all RFP Objectives	Not Realistic	Weaknesses Far Outweigh Strengths

- ***Applicability to Cost (or Price) Evaluation:*** No adjectival ratings are necessary for cost (or price) evaluations since cost (or price) is not rated. A risk factor associated with the contractor's ability to perform at the proposed price may be used. For cost-type contracts, cost realism based on the contractor's proposal (not the Independent Government Cost Estimate - IGCE) must be used for tradeoffs between cost and other factors in determining best value.

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### ***Result of Proposal Evaluation***

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- At the end of a proposal evaluation, the result must be that each factor and sub-factor has been evaluated, the merits and risks of a proposal have been documented and adjectival ratings have been used and assigned.

## CHAPTER 6: EVALUATION PROCESS

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### Overview

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The SSEB will perform an in-depth, systematic evaluation of the proposals against the evaluation factors and subfactors set forth in the solicitation. Using the evaluation factors and subfactors will facilitate an equitable, impartial, and comprehensive evaluation against the solicitation requirements. The SSEB does not compare proposals against each other. (See Chapter 8 for a discussion of the comparison process.)

While the specific evaluation processes and tasks will vary between source selections, the basic objective remains constant -- ***to provide the SSA with information to make an informed and reasoned selection.*** Towards this end, the evaluators will identify deficiencies, strengths, weaknesses, and uncertainties applicable to each proposal. Figure 6-1 contains definitions for each of these terms. In addition to the SSA using this information to make a source selection decision, the contracting officer will use it to establish a competitive range when discussions are necessary and, as appropriate, will provide the information to the respective offeror during clarifications, communications, and/or discussions (See Figure 7-1).

**Figure 6-1**  
**Definitions of Key Evaluation Terms**

- **Rating** – The evaluators’ conclusions (supported by narrative write-ups) identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies of an evaluation factor or subfactor. The ratings for the Technical Factor and each of its Subfactors will be expressed as an adjective.
- **Deficiency** – A material failure of a proposal to meet a Government requirement or a combination of significant weaknesses in a proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance to an unacceptable level.
- **Strength** – Any aspect of a proposal that, when judged against a stated evaluation criterion, enhances the merit of the proposal or increases the probability of successful performance of the contract.
- **Significant Strength** – A significant strength appreciably enhances the merit of a proposal or appreciably increases the probability of successful contract performance.
- **Weakness** – A flaw in a proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.
- **Significant Weakness** – A flaw that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.



It is imperative that there be an orderly method for the identification, reporting, and tracking of each of the items identified in Figure 6-1. Using evaluation forms and automated evaluation tools can ease the administrative burden associated with these tasks. Figure 6-2 is a sample form that may be used to report these items when you are not using an automated tool. ***Whatever method you use, it is important that you support the evaluation findings with narrative statements.*** All evaluations must be documented. Ratings alone are not conclusive data upon which to make a source selection decision.

**Figure 6-2**  
**Sample Summary Evaluation Form**

SUMMARY EVALUATION FORM											
RFP No:											
EVALUATOR'S NAME:		OFFEROR:									
RFP REFERENCES:		PROPOSAL REFERENCES:									
FACTOR:		VOLUME/PARAGRAPH:									
SUBFACTOR:		PAGE NUMBER:									
<b>Evaluation Rating:</b> <i>(Insert appropriate rating from applicable adjectival rating; e.g., Outstanding (O) Good (G) Acceptable (A) Marginal (M) Susceptible to Being Made Acceptable (S), Unacceptable (U))</i>											
<b>Evaluator's Rating: (Merit/Risk)</b> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Initial Rating: (e.g., G/M)</td> <td>Evaluator Initials/ Date:</td> <td>Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discussions:</td> <td>Evaluator Initials/ Date:</td> <td>Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Final Rating:</td> <td>Evaluator Initials/ Date:</td> <td>Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:</td> </tr> </table>			Initial Rating: (e.g., G/M)	Evaluator Initials/ Date:	Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:	Discussions:	Evaluator Initials/ Date:	Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:	Final Rating:	Evaluator Initials/ Date:	Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:
Initial Rating: (e.g., G/M)	Evaluator Initials/ Date:	Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:									
Discussions:	Evaluator Initials/ Date:	Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:									
Final Rating:	Evaluator Initials/ Date:	Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:									
<b>RATIONALE:</b> <i>Include supporting rationale for the ratings. Using the evaluation rating definitions, state the evaluation results in terms of strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and uncertainties. Also include any items for negotiations. Identify all comments and questions below with the rating (e.g., Initial Rating (IR), Result of Discussion (RD), or Final Rating (FR). Use continuation sheets or a database as needed and a separate sheet for every factor or subfactor.</i>											
<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <i>(Precede the strength with an (S) if it identifies a significant strength. Address any risks associated with the strength.)</i>											
<b>WEAKNESSES(identify IFN number(s) for each one):</b> <i>(Precede the weakness with an (S) if it identifies a significant weakness. Address the risks associated with the weakness.)</i>											
<b>DEFICIENCIES(identify IFN number(s) for each one):</b>											
<b>ITEMS FOR NEGOTIATION (IFNs) required for each weakness, significant weakness, deficiency and uncertainty</b>											

## Evaluation Steps

Following is a discussion of the general steps that the SSEB members will take in evaluating proposals. While these steps are identified in a linear manner, the process is actually iterative and some of the steps may be taken concurrently. Except where noted, these steps apply to the evaluation of both the cost and non-cost factors. (However, additional information related to the past performance and cost (or price) evaluations is provided in other sections of this chapter.) The groups responsible for evaluating past performance, other non-cost factors, and cost (or price) normally perform their evaluations in parallel. As necessary and appropriate, these groups should consult with one another to ensure that the evaluation of each proposal is performed in an integrated, comprehensive manner.

- **Step One: Conduct Preproposal Training** -- Prior to receipt of proposals, each evaluator should become familiar with all pertinent documents; e.g., the RFP, SSP, and adjectival ratings. You should conduct training that includes an overview of these documents and the source selection process, with detailed training on how to properly document each proposal's strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies and risks. Training should match the contents of this manual and should also include ethics training and the protection of source selection information. This training is especially crucial when there are evaluators with no prior source selection experience.
- **Step Two: Perform Initial Screening of Proposals** -- Upon receipt of proposals, the contracting officer or his/her designee should conduct an initial screening to ascertain that each offeror has submitted all of the required information, including electronic media, in the quantities and format specified in the RFP. Figure 6-3 is an extract of a sample audit sheet that may be used to accomplish this initial screening and should be tailored to match the specific proposal submission requirements of the RFP.

**Figure 6-3**  
**Sample Audit Sheet**

TAB	TECHNICAL PROPOSAL AUDIT	Circle the applicable response
1: Exec. Summary	Does this tab include a brief synopsis of the technical proposal?	Y / N
	Does it identify the offeror's proposed teaming partners and/or subcontractors and discuss the nature and extent of their proposed involvement in satisfying the Government's requirements?	Y / N
	Is a letter of commitment from each proposed team member and key subcontractor included at this tab?	Y / N
2: Matrix	Does this tab include a matrix which cross references the proposal and Volume 1 solicitation paragraphs (at least all titled paragraphs)?	Y / N
3: Exceptions	Are any exceptions identified at this tab?	Y / N
4: Install/Modify/ Terminate and Restore Service	Does this tab address paragraph 2.1 of the solicitation?	Y / N
	Is there a description of the format and content of a typical service restoration plan (as required by SOW para 2.1.5.a)?	Y / N
5: Customer Coordination	Does this tab include a detailed description of the proposed providing customer coordination services, based on	

- **Step Three: Identify and Document Areas of the Proposal that are resolvable through clarifications or communications --**

If information is required to enhance the Government's understanding of the proposal, the contracting officer may request amplification and other information from the offeror by means of the communication or clarification process (See Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of the differences between communications, clarifications and discussions).

- **Step Four: Prepare an Initial Evaluation Identifying and Documenting Proposal Deficiencies, Strengths, Weaknesses, Risks and Associated Items for Negotiation (IFNs)**

The evaluators must identify and document proposal deficiencies and any items for negotiation (IFNs). Additionally:

- The non-cost evaluators must identify and document the proposal strengths, weaknesses and risks and
- The past performance evaluators must identify and document performance risks using the Past Performance Adjectival Rating established in the SSP.

If cost realism is performed, the cost evaluators will assess cost risks as part of that process. This risk is not scored. Cost realism analysis results in a most probable cost estimate. The difference between the estimated cost and the most probable cost estimate provides the evaluators insight into the risk associated with performance from a cost perspective. The larger the difference between the cost proposed and the most probable cost estimate, the larger the risk that the offeror does not understand the requirement.

***When using the tradeoff process, identification of proposal strengths, weaknesses, risks, and deficiencies is crucial because:***

- ***The contracting officer will consider these items when determining the competitive range.***
- ***They provide the framework for any resultant discussions and debriefings.***
- ***Specific information on the relative strengths and weaknesses is the basis for tradeoff analysis and the source selection decision.***
- ***Proposals containing deficiencies are ineligible for award unless the deficiencies are resolved.***

- **Step Five: Assign Ratings for Non-Cost Evaluation Factors when using the Tradeoff Process**

At this point, the evaluators may or may not individually assign ratings to each evaluation factor or subfactor for which they are responsible. At a minimum, each evaluation group must convene to

discuss the offeror's proposal. The purpose of the discussion is to share their views on the offeror's strengths, weaknesses, risks and deficiencies related to their assigned evaluation factor(s)/subfactor(s) and to reach a final rating for each factor and subfactor using the Adjectival Rating(s) identified in the SSP. The final rating does not necessarily have to be reached through consensus of the evaluators. In exceptional cases where the evaluators are unable to reach an agreement without unreasonably delaying the source selection process, the evaluation report shall include the majority conclusion and the dissenting view(s) with supporting rationale which must be briefed to the SSA.

It should be noted that simple averaging of the individual evaluation results does not constitute consensus. Consensus requires a meeting of the minds on the assigned rating and associated deficiencies, strengths, weaknesses, and risks.

- **Step Six: Prepare a Summary Evaluation Report**

The final step is to prepare a summary report that includes for each proposal the evaluated price; the rating for each evaluation factor and subfactor; and a discussion of the associated strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and risks. An evaluation report must be prepared at each stage of the process, i.e., initial evaluation, interim evaluation and final evaluation. You may find it beneficial to utilize a matrix such as the one at Figure 8-3.

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### ***Past Performance Evaluations***

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The past performance evaluators assess the performance risk associated with each proposal. The final assessment describes the degree of confidence you have in the offeror's probability/likelihood of successful contract performance based on that offeror's demonstrated record of performance under similar contracts. Appendix D and Appendix E contain procedures for evaluating past performance.

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### ***Cost (or Price) Evaluations***

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For fixed priced contracts, the evaluation can be as simple as consideration of adequate price competition and ensuring prices are fair and reasonable. Fixed priced contracts also should be evaluated as to their appropriateness (i.e., consider market prices, appropriate risk and the possibility of a "buy-in") as to what is being offered. For cost-reimbursement contracts, you must analyze the offerors' estimated costs for both realism and reasonableness. The cost realism analysis enables you to determine each offeror's most probable cost of performance. This precludes an award decision based on an overly optimistic cost estimate. Additionally, whenever you perform cost analysis you must also perform profit or fee analysis.

***Cost (or price) must be an evaluation factor in all source selections.***

***The specific cost (or price) evaluation process will depend upon whether the resultant contract will be fixed price (FP) or cost reimbursement.***

Figure 6-4 provides a side-by-side comparison of what price analysis, cost analysis, cost realism analysis, and profit or fee analysis are and when they must be used. For detailed instructions and professional guidance on how to conduct these analyses, refer to FAR [Part 15.4](#) and Contract Pricing Reference Guides available on-line at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/contractpricing>. Also, refer to Appendix F for a general description of the cost realism analysis process.

**Figure 6-4**  
**Comparison of Price, Cost, Cost Realism, and Profit Analyses**

	Price Analysis	Cost Analysis	Cost Realism Analysis	Profit/Fee Analysis
<b>What is it?</b>	<p>The process of examining and evaluating an offeror's proposed price to determine if it is fair and reasonable without evaluating its separate cost elements and proposed profit/fee.</p> <p>Price analysis always involves some sort of comparison with other prices; e.g., comparing an offeror's proposed price with the proposed prices of competing offerors or with previously proposed prices for the same or similar items.</p>	<p>The review and evaluation of the separate cost elements and profit/fee in an offeror's proposal and the application of judgment to determine how well the proposed costs represent what the cost of the contract should be, assuming reasonable economy and efficiency.</p>	<p>The process of independently evaluating specific elements of each offeror's cost estimate to determine whether the estimated cost elements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realistic for the work to be performed;</li> <li>• Reflect a clear understanding of the requirements; and</li> <li>• Are consistent with the unique methods of performance and materials described in the offeror's technical proposal.</li> </ul> <p>The most probable cost estimate is a product of a cost realism analysis.</p>	<p>The process of examining the proposed profit or fee to determine if it is reasonable in light of the associated risks.</p> <p><a href="#">DFARS 215.404-4</a> contains DoD's policy on performing profit or fee analysis.</p>
<b>When must you perform it?</b>	<p>When cost and pricing data is not required to determine if the overall price is fair and reasonable.</p> <p>Price realism may be performed to determine that the price offered is consistent with the effort proposed.</p>	<p>When cost or pricing data is required.</p> <p>Also you may use it to evaluate information other than cost or pricing data to determine cost reasonableness or cost realism.</p>	<p>When cost-reimbursement contracts are anticipated. Also you may use it on FP incentive contracts or, in exceptional cases, on other competitive FP contracts when the offerors may not fully understand new requirements, there are quality concerns, or past experience indicates contractors' proposed costs have resulted in quality/service shortfalls.</p>	<p>When cost analysis is performed.</p>

The Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) plays a key role in both cost and price analysis. It serves as a benchmark for price analysis and in cost realism, it may also serve as a benchmark for individual cost elements.

Following are some general evaluation guidelines and recommendations for evaluating cost (or price):

- The cost (or price) evaluators should coordinate with the non-cost Factor/Team Chiefs as necessary to ensure consistency between the proposed costs (or prices) and other portions of the proposal. This interchange between evaluation committees/groups is part of the initial validation exercise and should be continued throughout the evaluation process to assure that interrelationships are promptly identified and the evaluation findings reflect their recognition. This will be beneficial for both the non-cost Factor/Team Chiefs and cost (or price) evaluators. For example, a clue to the soundness of a contractor's technical approach can often be obtained from an analysis of the related Contract Line Item Numbers (CLIN) structure. Conversely, when deficiencies are uncovered in the technical proposal, inadequacies in the cost (or price) and other proposal components may be revealed.
- While interchange between the evaluation committees/groups is paramount, it is necessary to protect the cost (or pricing) data to avoid intentional or unintentional bias on the part of the evaluators. To preclude prejudice, in most cases you should not disclose cost (or pricing) information to the non-cost evaluators. To the extent required, the SSEB chairperson shall manage the sharing of cost information, to include information required to conduct cost realism analysis. In all cases, provide the non-cost evaluators copies of the proposed CLINs without costs (or prices) so that they can ensure the proposed CLINS track to the associated narrative.
- When conducting price analysis, consider not only the total price, including options, but also the prices for the individual CLINS to ensure they are not unbalanced. Unbalanced pricing exists when the price of one or more contract line items is significantly over or understated as indicated by the application of cost or price analysis techniques. The contracting officer with concurrence of the SSA may reject the offer if they determine that this poses an unacceptable risk to the Government. For more information on unbalanced pricing see FAR [Part 15.404-1](#).
- In some cases, where you are using technically acceptable low price as basis for award, you may find it beneficial to utilize on-line reverse auctions as a pricing tool. See Appendix G for more information on this tool.

## CHAPTER 7: EXCHANGES WITH OFFERORS (AFTER RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS)

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### Overview

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The primary purpose of exchanges is to maximize the Government's ability to get the best value, based on the requirements and evaluation factors stated in the solicitation. Exchanges with offerors after receipt of proposals allow the Government to get information needed to better understand proposals and make best value decisions.

The contracting officer controls all exchanges with offerors. Before participating in any exchanges, the contracting officer should review the ground rules with the team members.

#### ***GROUND RULES FOR EXCHANGES***

***During exchanges with offerors, the Government may not:***

- ***Favor one offeror over another,***
- ***Reveal an offeror's solution to another offeror,***
- ***Reveal an offeror's price to another offer without that offeror's permission,***
- ***Knowingly disclose source selection information, or***
- ***Reveal the name of individuals providing past performance information.***

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### Types of Exchanges

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After receipt of proposals, there are three types of exchanges that may occur between the Government and offerors -- clarifications, communications and negotiations or discussions. They differ on when they occur, their purpose and scope, and whether offerors are allowed to revise their proposals as a result of the exchanges. Figure 7-1 provides a side-by-side comparison of the three types of exchanges.

**Figure 7-1: Comparison of Types of Exchanges  
(After Receipt of Proposals)**

	<b>Clarifications</b>	<b>Communications</b>	<b>Negotiations/Discussions</b>
<b>When They Occur</b>	When award WITHOUT discussions is contemplated	When award WITH discussions is contemplated -- prior to establishing the competitive range  May only be held with those offerors (other than offerors under FAR 15.306 (b)(1)(i)) whose exclusion from the competitive range is uncertain.	After establishing the competitive range  <b>Note:</b> The term “negotiations” applies to both competitive and non-competitive acquisitions. In competitive acquisitions, negotiations are also called discussions.
<b>Scope of the Exchanges</b>	Most limited of the three types of exchanges	Limited; similar to fact finding	Most detailed and extensive
<b>Purpose</b>	To clarify certain aspects of proposals	To enhance the Government’s understanding of the proposal by addressing issues that must be explored to allow a reasonable interpretation of the offeror’s proposal to determine whether a proposal should be placed in the competitive range	To allow the offeror an opportunity to revise its proposal so that the Government obtains the best value, based on the requirement and applicable evaluation factors
<b>Examples of Topics of Exchanges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance of an offeror’s past performance</li> <li>• Adverse past performance information</li> <li>• Resolution of minor or clerical errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambiguities or other concerns (e.g., perceived deficiencies, weaknesses, errors, omissions, or mistakes)</li> <li>• Relevance of an offeror’s past performance</li> <li>• Adverse past performance information</li> </ul>	Examples of potential discussion topics include: the identification of all evaluated deficiencies, significant weaknesses, weaknesses, and any adverse past performance information to which the offeror has not yet had an opportunity to respond.
<b>Are Resultant Proposal Revisions Allowed?</b>	No	No	Yes

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### ***Contract Awards Without Discussions***

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Before issuing a solicitation, you must decide whether or not you intend to award the resultant contract(s) without discussions. In making this decision, consider whether or not you are likely to obtain the best value without discussions. An award without discussions is most likely to result in best value when requirements are clear, commodities are known or stable, and the marketplace is extremely competitive.

The solicitation must clearly communicate the Government’s intention to award without discussions (See FAR [Part 15.209\(a\)](#)). However, even if the solicitation stated this intention, in exceptional circumstances you may still hold discussions, if appropriate, provided the contracting officer documents the file as to why discussions were necessary.



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## ***Contract Awards with Discussions***

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- ***Prior To Establishment of the Competitive Range***

Conduct communications only with those offerors who are neither clearly in nor clearly out of the competitive range. If the SSA has determined that (an) offeror(s) would be excluded from the competitive range based on past performance only, the contracting officer must conduct communications with the offeror(s). You must give the offeror(s) an opportunity to address any adverse past performance information about which the offeror(s) has not previously had an opportunity to comment.

Once you have enough information to decide how the proposal should be rated, the contracting officer will establish the competitive range with the SSA's approval.

- ***Establishing the Competitive Range***

The contracting officer will establish a competitive range before conducting discussions. The SSA, if other than the contracting officer, must approve the competitive range determination.

The competitive range will consist of all of the most highly rated proposals. Establishing the competitive range:

- Results in greater efficiency by limiting the number of offerors with whom you must hold discussions and
- Precludes offerors who have relatively weaker proposals from having to spend additional resources just to make their proposals competitive with the rest of the field.

The contracting officer determines, with approval of the SSA, which proposals are within the competitive range based on the evaluated price and other evaluation factors included in the RFP. The contracting officer may limit the number of proposals in the competitive range to the greatest number that will permit an efficient competition among the most highly rated proposals. In such case, the RFP must clearly state that the Government reserves the right to limit the competitive range for the purposes of efficiency. However, you should not establish predetermined cut-off ratings or identify a predetermined number of offerors that will be included in the competitive range. ***Rather, the contracting officer should make the competitive range determination using prudent business judgment based on the specifics of the source selection.*** The competitive range decision must be clearly articulated. Figure 7-2 identifies the steps involved in developing a competitive range.

**Figure 7-2: Development of a Competitive Range**

- Step 1:** Identify the most highly rated proposals. (Note: If there is only one proposal falling within the competitive range, ensure the evaluation factors and subfactors are not too restrictive and the procurement is truly competitive. The single proposal must meet the requirements of the RFP.)
- Step 2:** If these proposals exceed the number at which an efficient competition can be conducted and the RFP allows restricting the competitive range, limit the competitive range to the greatest number of proposals that will permit an efficient competition among the most highly rated proposals. In such a case, the basis for this further restriction must be adequately documented. However, before doing so consider the following:
- The expected dollar value of the award,
  - The complexity of the acquisition and solutions proposed, and
  - The extent of available resources.
- Step 3:** Obtain the SSA's approval of the competitive range.
- Step 4:** Document the competitive range determination and the supporting rationale.
- Step 5:** Promptly send written notification to the offeror(s) whose proposal is excluded from the competitive range (See Chapter 9).

The contracting officer and the SSA should continually reassess the competitive range as discussions and evaluations continue, to ensure neither the Government nor the offerors waste resources by keeping proposals in that are no longer contenders for award. The contracting officer must notify the offeror immediately of its elimination from the competitive range. See Chapter 9 that addresses pre-award and post-award notifications.

- **After Establishment of the Competitive Range**

The contracting officer must conduct meaningful discussions with all offerors within the competitive range. The contracting officer will tailor the discussions to each offeror's proposal relative to the solicitation requirements and evaluation factors. *To be meaningful, at a minimum, discussions must include identification of all evaluated deficiencies, significant weaknesses, weaknesses, and any adverse past performance information to which the offeror has not yet had an opportunity to respond. The contracting officer also is encouraged to discuss other aspects of the offeror's proposal that could, in the opinion of the contracting officer, be altered or explained to enhance materially the proposal's potential for award. However, the contracting officer will not discuss*

*with individual offerors how their proposal compares to other offerors proposals (technical leveling and/or technical transfusion is not allowed).*

The contracting officer will confirm information obtained through discussions by requesting or allowing proposal revisions, as appropriate, from offerors who are within the competitive range and still eligible for selection. You should require offerors to submit written proposal changes resulting from discussions before requesting final proposal revisions. As necessary, this will allow you to conduct further discussions before the final cutoff date.

After receipt of the offerors' responses to all the issues raised during discussions, you must re-evaluate proposals. Factors impacted by the responses must be rated again in the same manner as in the initial evaluation.

At the conclusion of discussions, the contracting officer must give all offerors remaining in the competitive range an opportunity to submit final proposal revisions by a common cutoff date and time. You must notify the offerors that any late responses are subject to the provision on late submissions. If further negotiations are necessary, you must extend a second final proposal revision opportunity to all offerors after receiving approval from the SSA.

## CHAPTER 8: SELECTION AND AWARD

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### Overview

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After the evaluators have completed the final evaluation of the individual proposals, the results of the evaluation will be presented to the SSA. The SSA will compare the proposals to determine the one(s) that represent(s) the best value to the Government, taking into consideration the stated evaluation factors and their respective weightings as specified in the RFP. In more complex source selections, the SSA will usually require the SSAC (or SSEB in the absence of a SSAC) to identify salient discriminating factors amongst offerors to aid the SSA in the selection process.

The selection process is complex and depending upon the evaluation factors, the SSA may exercise a significant degree of judgment in selecting the successful offeror(s). The adjectival ratings assigned by the evaluation team are labels and not the sole basis for proposal comparison. ***The SSA must not base his/her decision merely on the adjectival ratings, but rather on a tradeoff analysis which compares the strengths and weaknesses of the competing proposals.***

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### Documenting and Presenting the Proposal Evaluation to the SSA

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#### NOTES:

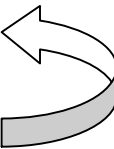

- The evaluation results may be presented to the SSA with the offerors identified or the offerors names removed and replaced with alpha identifiers, i.e., Offeror A, Offeror B, Offeror C.
- IAW AFARS [Part 5115.101](#), the SSA shall not receive a rank order or order of merit list pertaining to the offers being evaluated. Also, do not provide a selection recommendation to the SSA.

The SSEB Chairman is responsible for preparing the documentation of the evaluation for presentation to the SSA. This will not include a selection recommendation. The SSA will use this documentation as an aid when making the selection decision based upon exercising prudent business judgment as to which proposal represents the “Best Value.” At the request of the SSA, the SSAC and/or SSEB members present the evaluation results by means of one or more briefings. Figure 8-1 illustrates a sample format for the briefing; Figures 8-2 and 8-3 illustrate sample attachments to the report. The documentation should be clear and concise and should cross-reference, rather than repeat, information in existing documents as much as possible (e.g., the SSP, evaluation team reports, etc.).

**Figure 8-1**  
**Sample Briefing Format**

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** Include information such as the evaluation factors and subfactors; Source Selection Organization (SSO) structure; summary of the solicitation requirements; the number of offers received; and number of offerors remaining in the competitive range.
- II. **PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL EVALUATION RESULTS:** Summarize the evaluation results of each remaining offeror's proposal. You may use the sample format at Figure 8-2. Present both cost and non-cost factor evaluation results in a format which facilitates the SSA's understanding of each proposal's evaluation. Include each proposal's major strengths and weaknesses.
- III. **SUMMARY:** Summarize the proposal evaluations in a comparative chart, and if necessary, include brief statements and issues considered significant to the SSA's decision. Do not include a selection recommendation. You may use a matrix such as the example at Figure 8-3.

**Figure 8-2**  
**Sample Format for Individual Proposal Evaluation Results**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACTORS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TECHNICAL MERIT/PROPOSAL RISK</b></p> <p>Summarizes assessment of the offeror's proposal as measured against the technical subfactors. Also, summarizes assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and risks associated with the offeror's proposed approach derived from the technical evaluation</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Example: Good</b></p>	 <p>Technical Subfactor 1 Technical Subfactor 2 Technical Subfactor 3</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PAST PERFORMANCE RISK</b></p> <p>Summarizes assessment of the offeror's demonstrated performance on recent and relevant contracts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Example: Moderate Risk</b></p>	 <p>Past Performance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COST (OR PRICE)</b></p> <p>Reflects the total proposed or evaluated cost (or price). Where cost realism is evaluated, the cost also reflects the most probable cost resulting from any adjustments made for cost realism.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Example: Proposed Cost \$XXX</b> <b>Most Probable Cost        \$XXX</b></p>	

**Figure 8-3**  
**Sample Matrix Summarizing a Typical Proposal Evaluation Comparison**

OFFEROR	TECHNICAL MERIT PROPOSAL RISK	PAST PERFORMANCE RISK	EVALUATED COST (Most Probable Cost)
A	Outstanding	Low	\$171,503,971
B	Outstanding	Moderate	\$134,983,305
C	Good	Moderate	\$120,976,836
D	Outstanding	Moderate	\$150,840,308
E	Acceptable	Low	\$115,751,933

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### **Source Selection Decision**

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The SSA must make the source selection decision using rational and independent judgment based upon a comparative analysis of the competing proposals. The SSA performs this analysis by comparing the strengths, weaknesses, and the cost/price of the competing proposals to determine which proposal represents the best value to the Government. The analysis must be consistent with the evaluation factors and process described in the RFP and SSP. Beyond this, the SSA has broad discretion in making the source selection decision.

The SSA may not merely rely on the adjectival ratings alone. To determine which proposal provides the best value, the SSA must analyze the differences between competing proposals. This analysis must be based on the facts and circumstances of the specific acquisition. The SSA is not bound by the evaluation findings of the SSEB as long as the SSA has a rational basis for the differing opinion.

While the SSA may use the evaluation findings and analysis prepared by the SSAC/SSEB, the SSA must make the source selection decision based on his/her independent judgment. In rare occasions, if the SSA

**Figure 8-4**  
**Source Selection Decision Criteria**

***THE SOURCE SELECTION DECISION  
MUST:***

- *Represent the SSA's rational and independent judgment;*
- *Be based on a comparative analysis of the proposals;*
- *Be consistent with solicitation evaluation factors and subfactors.*

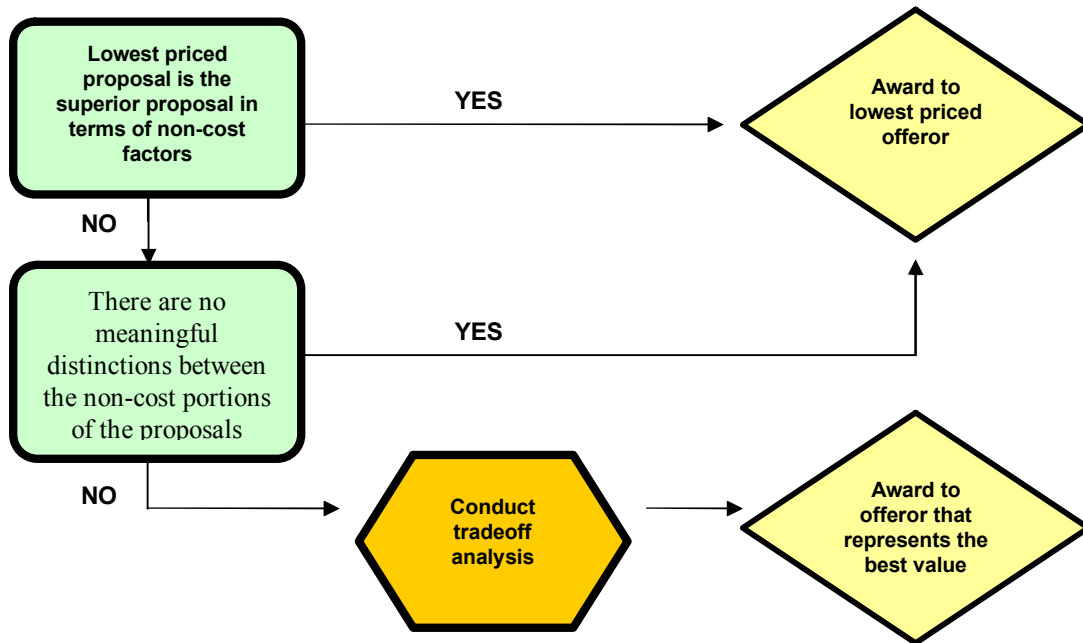
identifies concerns with the evaluation findings and/or analysis, he/she may require the SSEB and/or SSAC to conduct a reevaluation and/or analysis to address these concerns.

There are three basic outcomes of the SSA's comparative analysis:

- The lowest-priced proposal is superior in terms of non-cost factors,
- There are no meaningful distinctions between the non-cost portions of the proposals.
- The lowest-priced proposal is not superior in terms of non-cost factors.

In the first two outcomes, the decision is fairly clear that the award should be made to the lowest-priced offeror. However, in the case of the third outcome, the decision is not as clear. The SSA must consider whether or not the benefits of the non-cost strengths warrant the additional price premium. This is accomplished by conducting a trade-off analysis among the competing proposals. Figure 8-5 is a decision model that the SSA may use in determining the successful offeror(s). While the decision model appears simple, the process is far from simple. The evaluation, proposal comparison, and tradeoff analysis process require a great deal of subjectivity and judgment.

**Figure 8-5**  
**Decision Model for Determining the Successful Offeror(s)**




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### ***Tradeoff Analysis***

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In source selections other than lowest price technically acceptable, and as described above, the tradeoff process shall be used. The tradeoff process, or tradeoff analysis, compares the strengths and weaknesses of the competing proposals to determine which proposal(s) represent(s) the best value to the Government and thus shall receive contract award. This process shall be considered the norm in source selection plans and competitive requests for proposals (RFPs). Use of any other basis of award

must be approved by the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting (PARC) in formal source selections, prior to solicitation issuance.

- It is Army Policy not to rank offers (AFARS [Part 5115.101.](#)) Tradeoff analysis is a subjective process in that it requires the SSA to exercise reasonable business judgment. When performing this analysis, consider each proposal's total evaluated price and the discriminators in the non-cost ratings as indicated by each proposal's strengths, weaknesses, and risks. Consider these differences in light of the relative importance of each evaluation factor. Figure 8-6 identifies suggested steps in performing a tradeoff analysis.

**Figure 8-6**  
**Suggested Steps in Performing Tradeoff Analysis**

- Step 1.** Identify the proposal differences that surfaced during evaluations.
- Step 2.** Analyze their impact on the acquisition objectives in light of the relative importance of the evaluation factors.
- Step 3.** Compare proposals.
- Step 4.** Assess the best mix of cost (or price) and non-cost benefits and determine whether the strengths of higher-rated proposals are worth the price premium.

The tradeoff process does not preclude eventual selection of the lowest price acceptable offer as providing the best value. In fact, selection of a higher-priced offer always involves the necessity to state in the source selection decision document the rationale for concluding that payment of a higher price is justified by a proportionate superiority in non-cost factors. If the superior technical proposal is not selected, it is also imperative that the rationale for its non-selection be documented.

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### ***Documenting the Source Selection Decision***

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The SSA must document his/her rationale for selecting the successful offeror(s) in an independent, stand-alone document. The source selection decision document should explain how the successful proposal(s) compared to other offerors' proposals based on the evaluation factors and subfactors in the solicitation and should discuss the judgment used in making tradeoffs. In the event that the SSA disagrees with a finding(s) of the SSEB, the SSA's rationale shall be part of the decision document. Figure 8-7 illustrates the type of information that must be included in the source selection decision document.

When the SSA determines that the best value proposal is other than the lowest-priced proposal, the document must explicitly justify paying a price premium regardless of the superiority of the proposal's non-cost rating. The justification must clearly state what benefits or advantages the Government is receiving for the added price and why it is in the Government's interest to expend the additional funds. This justification is required even when the solicitation indicates that non-cost factors are more important than cost (or price).

**Where the SSA determines the non-cost benefits offered by the higher-priced, technically superior proposal are not worth the price premium, an explicit justification is also necessary.**



The SSA shall engage legal counsel in review of the source selection decision document to assure that the decision clearly articulates the business judgment of the SSA.

This document becomes part of the official contract file and can be released, provided that any information exempt under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is not released (i.e., proprietary and business sensitive information, trade secrets and cost information). You may find it beneficial to provide the unsuccessful offeror(s) with a copy of the document at their debriefing(s). If you choose to provide them with a copy, you must redact the copy to remove information pertinent to other unsuccessful offerors and information that is exempt under FOIA.

### Figure 8-7 Sample Source Selection Decision Document

1. **Decision Statement.** *Example: As Source Selection Authority for this acquisition, I have determined that the \_\_\_\_ product/service proposed by Offeror C provides the best overall value to satisfy Army needs. This selection was made based upon the factors and subfactors established in the solicitation and my integrated assessment and comparison of the strengths, weaknesses, and risks of the proposals submitted in response to the solicitation. This memorandum documents the basis for my decision.*
2. **Brief description of the product/service being procured.**
3. **Brief description of the basis for award (as set forth in the RFP), including the factors and subfactors against which proposals were measured and their relative order of importance.**
4. **A list of offerors in the competitive range.**
5. **Rationale for business judgments and tradeoffs.** Include the following:
  - *Succinct comparison of each proposal, focusing on key proposal differences (strengths, weaknesses, and risks) that surfaced in the evaluation and their impact on the acquisition.*
  - *Explanation of specific tradeoffs that led to the decision.*
  - *Explanation of specific benefits of the technically superior offeror(s) and why they are or are not significant enough to warrant any additional cost.*
6. **Summary.** *Example: In summary, based on my integrated assessment of all proposals in accordance with the specified evaluation factors and subfactors, it is my decision that Offeror C's proposal offers the best overall value.*

See Appendix H for a sample Source Selection Decision Document.

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## Awarding the Contract(s)

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After the SSA has signed the source selection decision document, the contracting officer will execute and distribute the contract(s). (Congressional notification may be required IAW FAR [Part 5.303](#). For Section

8(A) Set Asides, the SBA shall be notified IAW FAR [Part 19.804](#).) For Small Business Programs, the apparent unsuccessful offerors shall be provided the pre-award notice required by FAR 15.503(a)(2).

## CHAPTER 9: NOTIFICATION TO UNSUCCESSFUL OFFERORS

The contracting officer must promptly notify unsuccessful offerors in writing after contract award or whenever their proposals are eliminated from the competition. The type of information that must be included in the notice will depend upon whether it is sent before or after contract award. Figure 9-1 provides a side-by-side comparison of the differences between pre-award and post-award notices.

**Figure 9-1**  
**Comparison of Pre-award and Post-award Notices**

	PRE-AWARD NOTICE	POST-AWARD NOTICE
<b>Who Must be Notified?</b>	Any offeror whose proposal was excluded from the competitive range or otherwise eliminated from the competition before contract award.	Any offeror whose proposal was in the competitive range but was not selected for award or who had not received a pre-award notice.
<b>When Must it be Sent?</b>	Promptly after the offeror's proposal was eliminated from the competition.	Within 3 days after the date of contract award.
<b>What is Included in the Notice?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A summary of the basis for the determination</li> <li>• A statement that the Government will not consider any further proposal revisions from the offeror.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Small business offerors are entitled to additional information as described at FAR Part <a href="#">15.503</a>.</p> <p>After contract award and upon request from an offeror who previously received a pre-award notice, the contracting officer must provide the offeror the information normally provided as part of a post-award notice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of proposals received;</li> <li>• Name(s) and address(es) of awardee(s)</li> <li>• Items, quantities, and unit prices of each awardee. If listing the unit prices is impracticable, include only the total contract price. (However, upon request, the items, quantities, and any stated unit prices of each award shall be made publicly available.)</li> <li>• A summary of the reason(s) the offeror's proposal was not selected, unless the price information readily reveals the reason.</li> <li>• Notice of right to request a debriefing.</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 10: DEBRIEFING OF UNSUCCESSFUL OFFERORS

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## Overview

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The contracting officer must debrief unsuccessful offerors upon receipt of their written, timely request. The Government may also debrief the contract awardee(s), if requested. FAR [Part 15.505](#) and [Part 15.506](#) provide the regulatory policy on debriefings.

Since each offeror puts considerable resources into preparing and submitting a proposal, fairness dictates that you promptly debrief offerors and explain why a proposal was unsuccessful. Timely and thorough debriefings increase competition, encourage offerors to continue to invest resources in the Government marketplace, and enhance the Government's relationship and credibility with industry.

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## Purposes of a Debriefing

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### ***A debriefing is not:***

- ***A page-by-page analysis of the offeror's proposal,***
- ***A point-by-point comparison of the proposals of the debriefed offeror and other offerors, or***
- ***A debate or defense of the Government's award decision or evaluation results.***

A debriefing:

- Explains the rationale for the offeror's exclusion from the competition or non-selection for award;
- Instills confidence in the offeror that it was treated fairly;
- Assures the offeror that appropriately qualified personnel evaluated their proposal in accordance with the RFP and applicable laws and regulations;
- Identifies strengths and weaknesses in the offeror's proposal so the offeror can prepare better proposals in future Government acquisitions;
- Reduces misunderstandings and reduces the risk of protests; and
- Gives the offeror an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the RFP, discussions, evaluation, and the source selection process.

## ***Pre-award Versus Post-award Debriefings***

There are two types of debriefings – pre-award and post-award. Each unsuccessful offeror is entitled to one debriefing. Figure 10-1 outlines when each type of debriefing is appropriate and what may and may not be disclosed at each. Of the two types, the pre-award is more restrictive in terms of what may be disclosed to the unsuccessful offeror since the procurement would be still on-going at the time of the debriefing.

**Figure 10-1: Comparison of Pre-award and Post-award Debriefings**

	<b>PRE-AWARD DEBRIEFING</b>	<b>POST-AWARD DEBRIEFING</b>
<b>Who is Entitled to a Debriefing?</b>	Offerors excluded from the competitive range or otherwise excluded from the competition before award.	Any unsuccessful offeror who has not had a pre-award debriefing.
<b>When Must the Government Conduct a Debriefing?</b>	As soon as practicable after receipt of a timely, written request. However, the contracting officer may refuse the request for a pre-award debriefing if it is not in the best interest of the Government to conduct a pre-award debriefing. (1) (2)	Within 5 days, to the maximum extent practicable, after receipt of a timely, written request for a debriefing. (3)
<b>What is a Timely Request?</b>	A request received by the contracting activity within 3 calendar days after the offeror received notice of exclusion from the competition. (4)	A request received by the contracting activity within 3 calendar days after the offeror received notice of contract award. (4)
<b>What Can Not Be Disclosed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of offerors</li> <li>• Identity of other offerors</li> <li>• Content of other offerors' proposals</li> <li>• Ranking of other offerors</li> <li>• Evaluation of other offerors</li> <li>• Point-by-point comparisons of a debriefed offeror's proposal with other proposals</li> <li>• Information prohibited from disclosure by FAR 24.202 or information exempt from release under the Freedom of Information Act (5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point-by-point comparisons of a debriefed offeror's proposal with other proposals (The ratings of a debriefed offeror and the awardee may be disclosed to the second level of evaluation without violating this principle.)</li> <li>• Information prohibited from disclosure by FAR 24.202, or information exempt from release under the Freedom of Information Act (5).</li> </ul>
<b>What Should Be Discussed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agency's evaluation of significant elements in the offeror's proposal (6);</li> <li>• A summary of the rationale for eliminating the offeror from the competition</li> <li>• Reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and other applicable authorities were followed in the process of eliminating the offeror from the competition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government's evaluation of the significant weaknesses or deficiencies in the offeror's proposal, if applicable;</li> <li>• The overall evaluated cost or price (including unit prices) and technical rating, if applicable, of the successful offeror and the debriefed offeror, and past performance information on the debriefed offeror;</li> <li>• The overall ranking of all offerors, when any ranking was developed by the agency during the source selection;</li> <li>• A summary of the rationale for award;</li> <li>• For acquisitions of commercial items, the make and model of the item to be delivered by the successful offeror; and</li> <li>• Reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and other applicable authorities were followed.</li> <li>• Other information, as appropriate.</li> </ul>

**Notes to Figure 10-1:**

- (1) The offeror may request the debriefing be delayed until after contract award. When delayed, the debriefing shall include all the information provided in a post-award debriefing.
- (2) In the event either the Government or offeror delays the debriefing, the contracting officer must provide the debriefing within the timeframe established for post-award debriefings.
- (3) If an offeror submits an untimely request for debriefing, the contracting officer should nonetheless conduct a debriefing if feasible. In such case, inform the offeror the request is untimely.
- (4) Do not count the day the offeror received the notice; start with the next day. Consider sending the notice by mail with return receipt requested or by electronic means (facsimile transmission or e-mail) with immediate acknowledgment requested so that you can easily establish the date the offeror received it.
- (5) Includes such things as trade secrets; privileged or confidential information, e.g., manufacturing processes and techniques, commercial and financial information, and cost data; and the names of individuals providing past performance information. It does not include information otherwise available without restriction to the Government or public.
- (6) If the element was significant enough to eliminate the offeror from the competitive range, it is significant for debriefing purposes. Include both positive and negative elements of the offeror's proposal to help improve future proposals.

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## ***Notification of Debriefing***

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Inform the offeror of the scheduled debriefing date by electronic means with immediate acknowledgment requested. If the offeror requests a later date, you should require the offeror to acknowledge in writing that it was offered an earlier date, but requested the later date instead. This procedure will protect the Government's interests if the offeror subsequently files a protest.

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## ***Debriefing Methods and Location***

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You must debrief one unsuccessful offeror at a time. The contracting officer is responsible for selecting the method and location of the debriefing. The location should provide a professional and non-distracting environment. Although face-to-face debriefings are frequently used, you may also conduct a debriefing by telephone or electronic means. It may be burdensome for an offeror to attend in person and the needs of the offeror should be afforded due consideration. Likewise, if some of the Government personnel are located at an installation other than where the debriefing will be conducted, they may participate by telephone or videoconference.

**NOTE:** You may provide an advance copy of the debriefing to the offeror and allow the offeror to provide written questions for the Government to review prior to the face-to-face, telephone, or video teleconference debriefing.

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## ***Attendees***

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- ***Government Personnel***

The contracting officer will chair and control the debriefing and select the Government attendees. It is extremely important to ensure appropriate Government personnel attend so that a meaningful debriefing is achieved. The contracting officer may rely on SSEB members to address specialized areas of the offerors' proposals. The contracting officer's legal counsel should participate in preparation of the debriefing. Normally, legal counsel should attend the debriefing when the offeror's legal counsel is in attendance. In the event there are indicators that a protest is likely, inform your legal counsel.

However, the contracting officer must not deny a debriefing because a protest is threatened or has already been filed.

- **Debriefed Offeror Personnel**

The contracting officer should ask an offeror to identify all of the firm's individuals by name and position that will attend the debriefing. Normally, do not restrict the number of personnel the debriefed offeror may bring unless there are space limitations.

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## **Preparing for a Debriefing**

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**A debriefing  
requires  
preparation!**

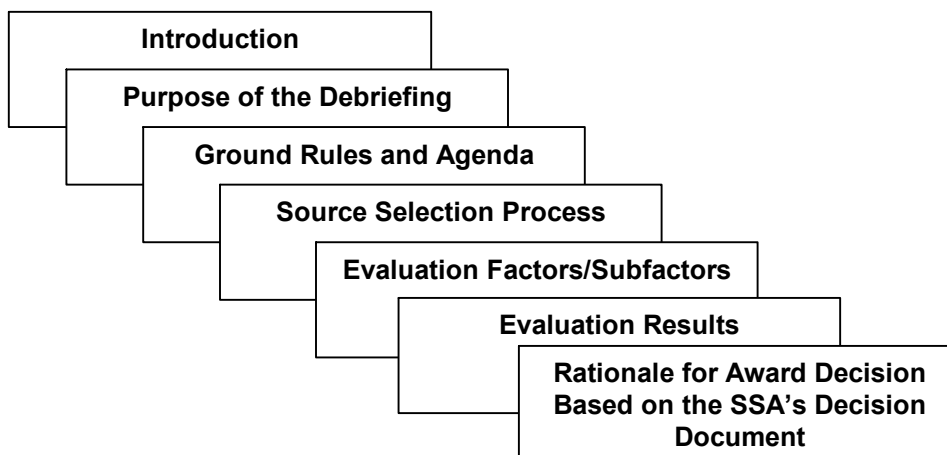
A poorly prepared debriefing is the surest way to lose the confidence of the offeror and increase the prospects of a protest. The extent of preparation necessary varies considerably with the complexity of each acquisition. Sometimes, merely preparing debriefing charts is sufficient. Other times, a written script and dry run rehearsals may be beneficial. Because debriefings are time sensitive, preparation must begin before proposal evaluation is complete. SSO members may assist in preparing debriefing charts (which may be later provided to the offeror). Finally, the contracting officer must brief all Government personnel that will attend the debriefing on their roles and expected demeanor during the debriefing.

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## **General Outline for Debriefings**

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Following is a general outline for a typical debriefing. The contracting officer is responsible for determining the exact format for each debriefing.



*Normally, you may identify the SSA, with his/her permission, but do not disclose the identity of other members of the source selection organization, other than those present at the debriefing.*

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## Handling Questions

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As a general rule, do not answer questions “on the fly” and get all questions in writing. Hold a Government caucus to formulate a response before providing an answer. At the end of the debriefing advise the offeror that the debriefing is officially concluded. At the discretion of the contracting officer, you may answer questions submitted by the offeror subsequent to the date on which the debriefing was conducted. However, in such cases, you must advise the offeror that the information is not considered part of the official debriefing (thereby not impacting the protest time period).

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## Other Information to Ensure a Meaningful Debriefing

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- In a post-award debriefing, you must disclose the evaluation ratings of the debriefed offeror and awardee to the subfactor level of evaluation; and all significant weaknesses and strengths of the debriefed offeror’s proposal. If the weakness was of significant enough concern to warrant mentioning it during discussions, it is significant for debriefing purposes as well.
- You must disclose the debriefed offeror’s total evaluated prices for each CLIN and the awardee’s total evaluated cost (or price).
- Disclose a summary of the rationale for the contract award decision. The rationale is contained in the SSA’s source selection decision document. Consider furnishing the debriefed offerors with a copy of this document. However, evaluation information concerning the other unsuccessful offerors and information not releasable under FOIA must be redacted prior to release.
- Other, information may be released, on a case-by-case basis **with guidance from the responsible legal office**. Examples of such information include:
  - The final overall ratings for non-cost factors for other unsuccessful offerors.
  - The final total evaluated price of the other unsuccessful offerors (release is limited to those situations where an unsuccessful offeror consents or the agency determines that the unsuccessful offeror, after consulting with it, would not suffer competitive harm from such a release.)
  - Other information about an awardee’s proposal that is not otherwise releasable if written authorization is obtained from the offeror. Releasing such information may, under certain circumstances, be the best way to avoid a protest. Under these circumstances, the contracting officer should explain to the successful offeror(s) that it is in both the Government’s and their interest for them to authorize such release.

*One of the primary goals of a debriefing is to inform the offeror of the positive and negative aspects of its proposal so it can provide more competitive proposals in future acquisitions.*



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## ***The Post Debriefing Memorandum***

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The contracting officer must include a summary of each debriefing in the contract file. Good post-debriefing memorandums are essential.

The post-debriefing memorandum should include at a minimum:

- A list of all debriefing attendees
- A summary of the information disclosed during the debriefing. The most efficient means for doing this is to attach the debriefing charts to the memorandum.
- The substance of all questions and answers discussed at, or provided subsequent to, the debriefing.

## APPENDIX A

# SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

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### ***Release of Source Selection Information***

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The Procurement Integrity Act precludes individuals from knowingly disclosing source selection information and contractor bid or proposal information before award of a Federal contract to which the information relates. However, the following individuals are authorized to approve release of source selection information to other authorized Government officials that have signed a non-disclosure statement providing the release would not jeopardize the integrity or successful completion of the procurement:

- When the release is after issuance of the solicitation, but prior to contract award:
  - For formal source selections -- the SSA.
  - For other than formal source selections -- the PARC.
- When the release is prior to issuance of the solicitation -- the contracting officer.

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### ***Security Briefing***

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Ensure all SSO personnel attend a security briefing that emphasizes that each SSO member:

- Is responsible for security of the evaluation and proposal materials and other source selection and proprietary information related to the procurement;
- Should be knowledgeable of, and adhere to, governing security procedures and regulations;
- Will not discuss, communicate, or otherwise deal on matters related to the source selection with any individual not assigned to the SSO, unless authorized (See above), and then only within appropriately secure areas; and
- Will challenge the presence of any apparent unauthorized individual within the SSO physical location.

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### ***Required Certificates and Reports***

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Each SSO member (including support personnel) must sign a certificate(s) that addresses nondisclosure of information, conflicts of interest, and rules of conduct (see sample certificate at Figure A-1).

#### **Figure A-1**

#### **Sample Certificate**

## SOURCE SELECTION PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

***Important! This Agreement concerns a matter within the jurisdiction of a United States Government agency. Individuals who make false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements and/or certifications may be subject to prosecution under 18 U.S.C, §1001.***

### AGREEMENT

1. This Agreement applies to individuals involved in Solicitation {*Number*}, also known as the {*Program Name*} (*The solicitation number and program name should be included in the Header of each page of the Agreement*).
2. This Agreement contains the rules of conduct relating to this acquisition. It includes rules of conduct regarding conflicts of interest as well as rules of conduct regarding the safeguarding of confidential information.
3. Your signature on this Agreement indicates that you have read this Agreement and agree to be bound by its terms.

### TERMS

4. I have read, understand and will abide by the requirements of Section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 USC 423) as implemented in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) §3.104. The Contracting Officer has made a copy of FAR §3.104 available to me.
5. \* To the best of my knowledge, neither I, my spouse, my dependent child(ren), nor members of my household:
  - a. Have any direct or indirect financial interest:
    - (1) In any firm on the list of potential offerors or which has otherwise expressed an interest in the acquisition (if this certification is made prior to receipt/opening of proposals).
    - (2) In any of the firms submitting proposals in response to this Solicitation or their proposed team members/subcontractors (if this certification is made subsequent to receipt/opening of proposals).
  - b. Have any other beneficial interest in such firms except:

- 
6. \* To the best of my knowledge, no person related to me by blood or marriage or any business associate is employed by or has a direct or indirect financial interest or any other beneficial interest in the firms referenced in paragraph 5.a, above, except:
- 
- 

\* The listing of interests or activities under paragraphs 5 and 6 above does not mean that the employee cannot participate in the acquisition/source selection process. The effect of the interests/activities will be determined by the Chairperson of the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB), as set out in the Source Selection Evaluation Plan (or the Contracting Officer for acquisitions at his/her level), after consultation with legal counsel.

7. I understand that 41 U.S.C. 423 and provisions of the FAR govern the release of proprietary and source selection information. I will not knowingly disclose any contractor bid or proposal information or source selection

information regarding this acquisition directly or indirectly to any person other than a person authorized by the head of the agency or the Contracting Officer to receive such information.

8. I will observe the following rules during the conduct of the acquisition:

a. I will not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any promise of future employment or business opportunity from, or engage, directly or indirectly, in any discussion of future employment or business opportunity with, any officer, employee, representative, agent, or consultant of a competing contractor.

b. I will not ask for, demand, exact, solicit, seek, accept, receive, or agree to receive, directly or indirectly, any money, gratuity, or other thing of value from any officer, employee, representative, agent, or consultant of any competing contractor for this acquisition. I will advise my family that the acceptance of a gratuity from those who are engaged in or seek to do business with the Department of Defense may be imputed to me and must therefore be avoided.

c. I will instruct members of my parent or home organization not to divulge my participation in the evaluation and source selection process or my physical location while participating in the evaluation and source selection process to unauthorized persons.

d. I understand that all communications with offerors or their team members/subcontractors concerning this acquisition must be made by/through the Contracting Officer or his or her designee. I will divert all attempted communications by offerors' representatives or any other unauthorized person to the Contracting Officer, and advise the Chairperson of the SSEB and legal counsel.

e. I will not discuss evaluation or source selection matters, including proprietary proposal information, with any unauthorized individuals (including Government personnel), even after the announcement of the successful contractor, unless authorized by proper authority. All discussions of evaluation/source selection matters with other SSEB members shall be conducted solely in those areas designated for deliberations.

9. I realize that my actions in connection with my participation in this source selection are subject to intense scrutiny and I will conduct myself in a way that will not adversely affect the confidence of the public in the source selection process. I will avoid any action, whether or not prohibited, that could result in or create the appearance of my losing independence or impartiality. I will not use my public office for private gain, and I agree not to engage in any personal business or professional activity, or enter into any financial transaction, that involves or appears to involve the direct or indirect use of "inside information" to further a private gain for myself or others.

10. I understand that my obligations under this certification are of a continuing nature, and if anything takes place which would cause a change to any statement, or create a violation of any representation or rule of conduct herein, I will immediately bring such matter to the attention of the Chairperson of the SSEB, or the Contracting Officer.

### **CERTIFICATION**

11. I agree to the Terms of this Agreement and certify that I have read and understand the above Agreement. I further certify that the statements made herein are true and correct.

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**Signature**

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**Name (Printed)**

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**Organization**

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**Date**

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***Handling of Source Selection Materials***

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Handle proposal and evaluation material in a manner consistent with “For Official Use Only” or, as appropriate, a higher security classification. Establish sufficient safeguards to protect the material whether it is in the possession of the SSO members or it is being disseminated, reproduced, transmitted, or stored. Additionally, establish appropriate procedures for disposal (e.g., shredding or burn bag disposal) of the material when it is no longer required by the SSO.

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***Security of Physical Facilities***

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In more complex source selections, you may need to establish procedures to ensure the security of the source selection physical facilities. These procedures may include:

- Requiring identification to access the SSO area and requiring authorized visitors (e.g., maintenance/service personnel) to sign in and out;
- Ensuring access points to the facilities are either manned at all times by a representative of the SSO or are kept locked (with appropriate key or password control procedures);
- Establishing procedures for approving visitors to the facilities; and
- Conducting security inspections and spot checks.

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***Responsibilities***

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All SSO members are responsible for the security of source selection information. In more complex source selections, it may be beneficial to designate certain members of the SSO to oversee and/or perform security control functions. These duties may be collateral duties or full-time duties of the team member.

## APPENDIX B

### PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

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#### ***Experience, Education and Skills***

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A key to selection of personnel is identification of the experience, education, and business and technical skills required of personnel at all levels of the SSO. Define the required skills and experience with enough flexibility to allow substitution of training for experience. Source selection training methods include formal classes, on-the-job training, study of available source selection documents, and briefings by people with source selection experience. The SSEB Chairperson should have previously been a Factor Chairperson. The Factor Chairperson should have served as an evaluator on a previous SSEB. In most instances, the contracting officer should not normally be the SSEB Chairperson or a Factor Chairperson. The PARC is responsible for determining the capability of the organization to effectively resource the SSO as set forth in the hierarchy of source selection expertise (Table B.1). In the event that the PARC determines that the required expertise is not obtainable, he/she shall consult with the HCA. If the HCA concurs that the resources are still unavailable the DASA(P & P) shall be notified and will assist in providing resources from other contracting activities or assign the procurement to another contracting activity for execution.

<b>Table B.1</b> <b><i>Hierarchy of Source Selection Expertise</i></b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look within own organization for expertise.</li> <li>• Export key personnel to an organization with expertise in source selection to participate and learn.</li> <li>• Hire contractor experts to augment the SSEB assuring there is no organizational conflict of interest.</li> <li>• If necessary bring in expertise from outside of own organization.</li> <li>• If expertise does not exist then move acquisition elsewhere.</li> </ul> |
|---|

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#### ***Freedom from Bias or Conflict of Interest***

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SSO members must not have any biases or conflicts of interest that would impact the source selection process. Financial interests in offerors and employment discussions with offerors are examples of conflicts of interests that would preclude an employee from participating in a source selection. (See the associated sample certificate at Appendix A that the SSO members must sign that will assist you in determining if an individual has a conflict of interest.)

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## ***Support Personnel***

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Once you identify the primary evaluation team, determine if support personnel may be desired or required. Examples of such personnel are:

- Administrative assistant; secretarial support for the SSEB and/or SSAC, administrative support (e.g., for briefing charts, evaluation worksheets, etc.),
- Security custodians and special security ("eyes only" messages) personnel,
- Librarian/document-control personnel,
- Reproduction support,
- Visual aids and/or video support personnel,
- Information technology support,
- Transportation support,
- Property support, and
- Budget personnel.

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## ***Sources of Personnel***

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The sources of necessary personnel include the program management office (PMO), the command and/or major subordinate command, other military services, DoD agencies, civilian agencies and non-Government sources. Non-Government sources can include academia, nonprofit institutions, and industry willing to be subject to the organizational conflicts of interest provisions of FAR [Part 9.5](#).

Before support contractors may be used to evaluate or analyze any aspect of a proposal, the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting (PARC) must sign a written determination in accordance with FAR [Part 37.204](#). Support contractors may serve in advisory roles, assist in cost (or price) analysis, or perform administrative duties (e.g., information technology support) related to source selections. However, they may not be voting members of the SSO or participate in rating proposals or recommending a selection. They will have access only to those portions of the proposals and source selection information that they need to perform their SSO duties. When using support contractors, you must advise potential offerors of their participation in the source selection. Figure B-2 identifies suggested solicitation language relative to the use of commercial firms to support the source selection process.

**Figure B-2: Suggested Solicitation Language**

(1) Offerors are advised that employees of the firms identified below may serve as non-government advisors in the source selection process. These individuals will be authorized access only to those portions of the proposal data and discussions that are necessary to enable them to perform their respective duties. Such firms are expressly prohibited from competing on the subject acquisition.

INSERT NAMES, ADDRESSES, AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF FIRMS

(2) In accomplishing their duties related to the source selection process, the aforementioned firms may require access to proprietary information contained in the offerors' proposals. Therefore, pursuant to FAR [Part 9.505-4](#), these firms must execute an agreement with each offeror that states that they will (1) protect the offerors' information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and (2) refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished. To expedite the evaluation process, each offeror must contact the above companies to effect execution of such an agreement prior to the submission of proposals. Each offeror shall submit copies of the agreement with their proposal.

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## ***Staffing Levels***

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Identify the staffing as full-time or part-time personnel and specify the point in the evaluation process by which personnel must be available. The time available to conduct the evaluation can influence staffing requirements.

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## ***Management Support***

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Management support is critical to obtaining people for the SSO. This includes the MACOM commander and the Program Executive Officer (PEO), as applicable. Managers may be reluctant to release personnel for SSEBs, especially if a prolonged evaluation period is projected. Some functional area heads may not be motivated to support such efforts. Top management support can alleviate any such reluctance.



# APPENDIX C

## ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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### ***Introduction***

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Oral presentations (sometimes referred to as oral proposals) provide offerors an opportunity to present information verbally that they would normally provide in writing. You can conduct oral presentations in person or via video teleconference. However, a video taped presentation does not constitute an oral presentation since it does not represent a real-time exchange of information.

Oral presentations may be beneficial in a variety of acquisitions. They are most useful when the requirements are clear and complete and are stated in performance or functional terms. Oral presentations are ideal for gathering information related to how qualified the offeror is to perform the work, how well the offeror understands the work, and how the offeror will approach the work.

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### ***Scope of the Oral Presentation***

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Before you can decide if oral presentations are appropriate for a given acquisition, you must select the evaluation factors and subfactors. Then decide whether the information you need to evaluate these criteria can be better presented orally or in writing or through a combination of both means.

You cannot incorporate oral statements in the contract by reference, so any information you want to be made part of the contract needs to be submitted in writing. At a minimum, the offeror must submit certifications, representations, and a signed offer sheet (including any exceptions to the Government's terms and conditions) in writing. Additionally, as a rule of thumb, the offeror must submit other hard data ("facts"), such as pricing or costing data and contractual commitments, as part of the written proposal.

Oral presentations can convey information in such diverse areas as responses to sample tasks, understanding the requirements, experience, and relevancy of past performance.

***In deciding what information to have the offerors provide through oral presentations, you should consider the following:***

- ***The Government's ability to adequately evaluate the information,***
- ***The need to incorporate any information into the resultant contract,***
- ***The impact on the efficiency of the acquisition, and***
- ***The impact (including cost) on small businesses.***

Require offerors to submit their briefing materials in advance of the presentations. This will allow Government attendees an opportunity to review the materials and prepare any associated questions.

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### ***Request for Proposal Information***

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If oral presentations are appropriate, you must notify offerors in the RFP that the Government will use oral presentations to evaluate and select the contractor. The proposal preparation instructions must contain explicit instructions and guidance regarding the extent and nature of the process that will be used. Discourage elaborate presentations since they may detract from the information being presented. At a minimum, include the following information in the RFP:

- The types of information the offeror must address during the oral presentations and how they relate to the evaluation criteria,
- The required format and content of the presentation charts and any supporting documentation,
- Any restrictions on the number of charts or the number of bullets per chart and how you will handle material that does not comply with these restrictions,
- The required submission date for the presentation charts and/or materials,
- The approximate timeframe when the oral presentations will be conducted and how you will determine the order of the offerors' presentations,
- Whether any rescheduling will be permitted if an offeror requests a change after the schedule has been established,
- The total amount of time each offeror will have to conduct their oral presentation,
- Who must make the presentation and a requirement that the offeror provide a list of names and position titles of the presenters,
- Whether the presentation will be video or audio taped,
- The location of the presentation site and a description of the site and resources available to the offeror,
- Any rules and/or prohibitions regarding equipment and media,
- How you will treat documents or information referenced in the presentation material but never presented orally,
- Any limitations on Government-offeror interactions during and after the presentation,
- Whether the presentation will constitute discussions (See Figure 7-1),

- Whether you will use the information in the oral presentation solely for source selection purposes or whether such information will become part of the contract (which will require a subsequent written submission of that information), and
- Whether the offeror should include any cost (or price) data in the presentation.

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## **Timing and Sequencing**

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You can conduct oral presentations either before or after establishing the competitive range. If you conduct the oral presentations prior to establishing the competitive range, you must be careful they do not result in discussions.

Since preparing and presenting an oral presentation involves time and expense, you do not want to require offerors who are not likely to be serious candidates for award to have to conduct oral presentations. This can be an important consideration with small businesses. When this is a concern, establish the competitive range prior to oral presentations and clearly articulate in the RFP the methodology for doing so.

The contracting officer will often draw lots to determine the sequence of the offerors' presentations. The time between the first and the last presentation should be as short as possible to minimize any advantage to the offerors that present later.

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## ***Time Limits***

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Establish a total time limit for each offeror's presentation. It is not advisable to limit the time for individual topics or sections within the presentation; this detail is the presenter's responsibility. If you are planning a question and answer session, exclude it from the allotted time and set a separate time limit for it.

There is no ideal amount of time to be allotted. Make this decision using prudent business judgment based upon the complexity of the acquisition and your own (or others') experience and lessons learned.

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## ***Facility***

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Usually you will want to conduct the presentations at a facility you can control. This helps guard against surprises and ensures a more level playing field. However, nothing precludes you from conducting an oral presentation at an offeror's facility. This may be more efficient if site visits or other demonstrations are part of the source selection.

If you are using a Government-controlled facility, make it available for inspection and, if warranted, a practice session. Allowing offerors to get acquainted with the facility will help ensure that it does not detract from the presentation content.

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## ***Recording the Presentations***

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***Recording the presentation is not only required, it makes good business sense.***

Having an exact record of the presentation could prove useful both during the evaluation process and in the event of a protest or litigation. You can record the oral presentations using a variety of media; e.g., videotapes, audio tapes, written transcripts, or a copy of the offeror's briefing slides or presentation notes. The SSA is responsible for determining the method and level of detail of the record.

If you use videotaping, allow for the natural behavior of the presenters. If slides or view graphs are used, the camera should view both the podium and screen at the same time. Place the microphones so that all communications can be recorded clearly and at adequate volume. Every effort should be made to avoid letting the recording become the focus of the presentation.

The recording, which is considered source selection information, will become part of the official record. Provide a copy to the offeror and seal and securely store the master copy of the recording to ensure there are no allegations of tampering in the event of a protest or court action.

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## ***Government Attendance***

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The contracting officer should chair every presentation. All of the Government personnel involved in evaluating the presentations should attend every presentation.

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## ***Presenters***

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The offeror's key personnel who will perform or personally direct the work being described should conduct their relevant portions of the presentations. Key personnel include project managers, task leaders, and other in-house staff of the offeror's or their prospective key subcontractors' organizations. This will avoid the oral presentation becoming the domain of a professional presenter, which would increase costs, detract from the advantages of oral presentations, and adversely affect small businesses.

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## ***Reviewing the Ground Rules***

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Prior to each presentation, the contracting officer should review the ground rules with the attendees. This includes discussing any restrictions on Government-offeror information exchanges, information disclosure rules, documentation requirements, and housekeeping items. These ground rules should also be included in the solicitation.

If you are using a quiz as part of your evaluation, the contracting officer needs to discuss the related ground rules. For example, can the offeror caucus or contact outside sources by cell phone before answering?

Avoid too much control and regulation since it will inhibit the exchange of information. However, if you intend to avoid discussions, the contracting officer should control all exchanges during the presentation. If conducting oral presentations after opening discussions, you must comply with FAR [Part 15.306](#) and [Part 15.307](#).

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### ***Evaluation of Presentations***

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Evaluations should be performed immediately after each presentation. Using preprinted evaluation forms will help the evaluators collect their thoughts and impressions. Remember, even if you use preprinted forms, evaluators have to provide the rationale for their conclusions.

# APPENDIX D

## USING CURRENT AND PAST PERFORMANCE AS A SOURCE SELECTION FACTOR

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### *Introduction*

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In past performance evaluations, you examine the offeror's performance record on similar contract efforts and use the information to predict how the offeror will perform under your contract. The Government must evaluate past performance in all competitively negotiated acquisitions expected to exceed the thresholds identified in FAR 15.304, unless the contracting officer documents why the evaluation of past performance is not appropriate. Use past performance as an evaluation factor when it makes good business sense and is anticipated to be a meaningful discriminator among potential offerors.

Where possible, use past performance information available from Government-wide and agency-wide databases. Use of such information will help to expedite and streamline the evaluation process. The Past Performance Information Management System (PPIMS) is the Army's central repository for the collection and utilization of Army-wide contractor Past Performance Information. In addition, the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) provides access to information about contractors and their performance collected throughout the Federal Government. If information is not readily available from existing databases, seek it from other Government entities and private sector sources (e.g., by means of questionnaires, published commercial evaluations, and interviews).

FAR [Parts 9, 12, 15, 36](#) and [42](#) contain regulatory policies related to the evaluation of past performance. FAR [Part 36](#) provides specific procedures, forms, and thresholds for evaluation of Architect & Engineering and construction acquisitions. Additionally, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and DoD have published the following guides that pertain to the evaluation of past performance information:

- OFPP guide: [Best Practices for Collecting and Using Current and Past Performance Information](#)  
Available at <http://www.arnet.gov/Library/OFPP/BestPractices/pastpeformguide.htm>
- DoD guide: [A Guide to Collection and Use of Past Performance Information](#)  
Available at [http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/Docs/PPI\\_Guide\\_2003\\_final.pdf](http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/Docs/PPI_Guide_2003_final.pdf)

This evaluation is different from making a responsibility determination, therefore, you do not have to refer adverse or negative findings related to small businesses to the Small Business Administration.

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## ***Relative Importance or Weight Assigned to Past Performance***

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You may assign any weight or relative importance to past performance compared to any other evaluation factor. However, the weight assigned to past performance should be sufficient enough to ensure that it is meaningfully considered throughout the source selection process and will be a valid discriminator among the proposals received.

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## ***Drafting Instructions to Offerors (Section L or Equivalent)***

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In Section L (or equivalent) of the RFP, you must clearly state what past performance information the offeror must submit as part of its proposal and/or oral presentation. Tailor the proposal submission requirements to reflect the complexity of the procurement and the relative importance assigned to past performance. Request only information necessary for the evaluation. Consider the following when developing proposal submission requirements.

- **Contract References --** Request offerors to submit a list of Government and non-Government contract references (including contract number, type, and dollar value; place of performance; date of award; whether performance is on-going or complete; extent of subcontracting; and the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of at least two points of contact (POCs) for each contract):
  - Require the list to include all relevant on-going contracts or contracts completed during a specified period. If you anticipate that the number of contracts will be excessive, limit the submission to a specified number of the most recent, relevant contracts. In such cases, require the contracts to have been on going for a specified period of time, since newly awarded contracts will probably not provide sufficient information.
  - Limit the specified period to not more than three years (six years for construction) from the RFP release date. This is because the Government must retain past performance information for no longer than three years (six years for construction) after completion of the contract. A shorter period may be appropriate for acquisitions where there are numerous actions and/or many vendors providing the required items.
  - When offerors are likely to be large, multi-function firms, limit the contract references to those performed by the segment of the firm (e.g., division, group, and unit) that is submitting a proposal.
  - Allow offerors to submit information related to their past performance on relevant efforts for state and local Governments, private sector clients, subcontracts, and team or joint efforts. Additionally, if offerors have no relevant past performance, allow them to provide past performance information for their key personnel and/or key subcontractors. This will help ensure firms new to the Federal process have a fair opportunity to compete and will reduce the instances where offerors have no record of past performance.
  - Advise the offerors that, while they may submit past performance information on relevant efforts under subcontracts, you may be unable to obtain any qualitative information due to the Government's lack of privity with subcontractors. In other words, since the Government deals

directly with prime contractors, the POCs may be unaware of the offeror's performance under a subcontract.

- **Past Performance Information of a Prospective Subcontractor** -- When you intend to evaluate subcontractors' past performance, explain how you will handle any related adverse past performance information. In many acquisitions, an offeror's prospective subcontractor may be the offeror's competitor on other acquisitions. In such cases, the prospective subcontractor may be hesitant to have any adverse information related to its past performance released to the offeror. On other acquisitions, this may not be an issue. You should tailor your acquisition accordingly and advise offerors in the RFP how you will handle disclosure of such information.
- **Description of Past Performance** -- It is not necessary or efficient to ask the offeror to provide a detailed description of all of its relevant past performance efforts. Instead, seek the appropriate information from existing databases and/or from identified contract POCs. However, you should allow potential offerors the opportunity to provide details on past performance problems and the corrective actions taken. As appropriate, have the offerors provide such information as part of their proposals or presented as part of their oral presentation, if used.
- **Sources of Information**
  - Rely on existing documentation from Federal databases to the maximum extent practicable. This will expedite and streamline the source selection process.
  - Advise potential offerors that you may use past performance information obtained from sources other than those identified by the offeror.
  - Advise potential offerors that you may not obtain information on all of the listed contract references and/or may not contact all of the identified POCs.
  - If adequate documentation is not readily available, you should seek the necessary information from individuals having knowledge about the offeror's past performance (e.g., contract POCs, etc.) You may utilize questionnaires or interviews to obtain the information from these individuals. Consider the following when using questionnaires:
    - Keep the questionnaire short. Typically, it should be no longer than 1-2 pages; long surveys are not returned timely, if at all.
    - Include a copy of the questionnaire in the RFP.
    - Either distribute the questionnaires to the POCs or have the offerors distribute them. In the latter case, the POCs must return the completed questionnaires directly to the Government. Having the offerors send out the questionnaires may save time and resources.
    - When practical, contact the respective POC prior to sending out a survey to advise them that they will be receiving it and emphasize the importance of their returning the completed surveys to you promptly.



- ***Relevant Past Performance –***

- Include in the RFP a definition of what constitutes relevant past performance. Factors that may be used to define relevancy include the size, scope, complexity, and contract type. The Comptroller General recommends the use of solicitation language such as “for the same or similar items” so that you do not overly restrict your ability to consider an array of information.
- As appropriate, require the offerors to provide a description of how the contract references are relevant to the immediate acquisition. Such information may be provided as part of the proposal or presented as part of their oral presentation, if used. In some cases, previous contracts as a whole may be relevant to the immediate acquisition, while only portions of other contracts may be relevant. In such cases, the offeror should specify which portions of the contract references are relevant to the immediate acquisition.
- Inform vendors that when an offeror’s or team member’s firm is divided into severable segments (e.g., division, group, or unit), that the Government will evaluate only the past performance of those segments of the firm(s) that will actually perform the work.

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***Drafting Evaluation Criteria (Section M or Equivalent)***

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In Section M (or equivalent) of the RFP, clearly state how past performance will be evaluated, its relative importance, and how offerors with no relevant past performance will be evaluated. Consider the following when drafting this section:

- ***Past Performance of Prospective Subcontractors and/or Team Members --*** You may find it beneficial to evaluate a key subcontractor’s or team member’s past performance. However, as the Government only has privity of contract with the prime contractor, do not make the past performance of a prospective subcontractor and/or joint venture partners a separate rating.
- ***Synergy of Evaluation Considerations --*** Use past performance to streamline the source selection process. For example, instead of evaluating management as an evaluation factor, assess management effectiveness as part of the past performance evaluation. A good record of management is an indicator that the offeror will perform well in this area on the immediate acquisition. Using past performance in this way may, under appropriate circumstances, eliminate the need for the offeror to submit management and quality plans.
- ***Past Performance Considerations --*** At a minimum, consider the offeror’s record of complying with contractual requirements in the areas of schedule, technical quality, and cost control (for cost reimbursement contracts). You may also consider the offeror’s record of business relations. Tailor the scope of the areas considered so that they match the immediate requirement. Carefully consider whether they add value to the overall assessment, warrant the additional time to evaluate, and are discriminators among the competing proposals.

- **Stand-Alone Evaluation Factor** -- Do not integrate past performance with other non-cost factors. Past performance should be a separate evaluation factor in order to reduce the chances of its impact being lost within other factors.

#### ***Potential Areas of Consideration***

- **Quality of Product or Service** – e.g., record of compliance with previous contract requirements, accuracy of reports, technical excellence, and quality awards/certificates.
- **Timeliness of Performance** – e.g., record of meeting milestones and delivery schedules, reliability, and responsiveness to technical direction.
- **Cost Control** – e.g., record of using cost efficiencies, relationship of negotiated costs to actual costs and providing current, accurate, and complete billing.
- **Business Relations** – e.g., record of effective management, subcontractor management, meeting socioeconomic goals, cooperative and proactive behavior with Government representatives, flexibility, submission of reasonably priced change proposals and responsiveness to inquiries.

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### ***Evaluating Past Performance***

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The evaluation team is responsible for conducting the past performance evaluation to determine the degree of performance risk involved in accepting each offeror's proposal. The final product of this analysis is a performance risk assessment. The evaluation team documents the performance risks, strengths, and weaknesses indicated by each offeror's past performance. When considering adverse information, determine whether the Government may have contributed to the problem and, if so, to what extent.

Following are general steps in the evaluation of past performance:

- **Step One: Gather Contract Efforts** -- The first step is to gather basic information on contract efforts that may be relevant to the immediate acquisition. You have broad discretion regarding the type of data to be considered in the past performance evaluation. This means you may consider a wide array of information from a variety of sources, but are not compelled to rely on all of the information available.
- **Step Two: Determine Relevancy and Recency of Past Performance Information**

The second step is to determine the relevancy and recency of the past performance information. Relevancy is a threshold question, not a separate element of past performance. In order for an offeror's record of past performance to be an indicator of its future performance, the past performance information must be relevant to the pending contract. Therefore, after you have collected past performance information, you must determine the relevancy of each contract effort. Contracts that are relevant must also be recent (within 3 years (6 years for construction) of RFP release).

- **Step Three: Assess Quality of Past Performance of Individual Efforts**

The third step is to assess the quality of the offeror's past performance on relevant efforts. You can gather qualitative information on the offeror's past performance through the use of databases, questionnaires, and/or interviews. (See Appendix E for sample questionnaire) If possible, contact two POCs on each contract effort selected for in-depth review. Contracting officers, contracting officer's representatives (CORs), and program management office representatives often are excellent sources of information.

***When assessing feedback from:***

- ***End users -- remember they may be unfamiliar with the contract requirement or the source of the problem may be transparent to them.***
- ***Private-sector references – consider the potential of any conflict of interest between the offeror and reference.***

At this point, you may or may not assign ratings to each individual contract effort. If you do assign ratings, use them as guides for arriving at the consensus rating described in Step Four.

- **Step Four: Assign a Rating to the Past Performance Factor**

Once you have assessed the relevant past performance information, the final step is for the evaluation team to arrive at a consensus rating for the past performance factor using the adjectival rating in the SSP. (See sample [adjectival rating](#) in Chapter 5.) Occasionally, the evaluators will be unable to arrive at a consensus. In such case, you may include the dissenting opinion with supporting rationale as part of the assessment report.

***The rating process is not a precise mechanical process, but rather requires subjective judgment.***

In determining the rating, take into consideration the number and severity of problems, the demonstrated effectiveness of corrective actions taken (not just planned or promised), the overall work record, and the degree of relevancy of all of the considered efforts. What you are looking for is overall results, not problem-free management.

The final assessment should include the rationale for the conclusions reached, including instances of good or poor performance related to the solicitation requirement. As long as the rationale is reasonable, i.e. based on analysis, verification, or corroboration of the past performance information and is evaluated against the evaluation factors stated in the RFP, it will withstand legal scrutiny.

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## ***Lack of Past Performance Information***

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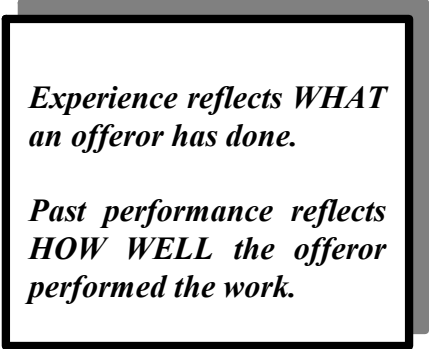
If the offeror is truly a new entity and none of the company principals have relevant work experience, the offeror is considered to have no past performance. In the case of an offeror without a record of relevant past performance or for whom information on past performance is not available, you must evaluate the offeror's lack of past performance as neutral/unknown risk, having no favorable or unfavorable impact on the evaluation.

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## ***Past Performance Versus Experience***

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It is important to understand the definition of an offeror's experience and its past performance. Experience is *what* the offeror has done; past performance is *how well* the offeror did it.



*Experience reflects WHAT  
an offeror has done.*

*Past performance reflects  
HOW WELL the offeror  
performed the work.*

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## ***Adverse Past Performance Information***

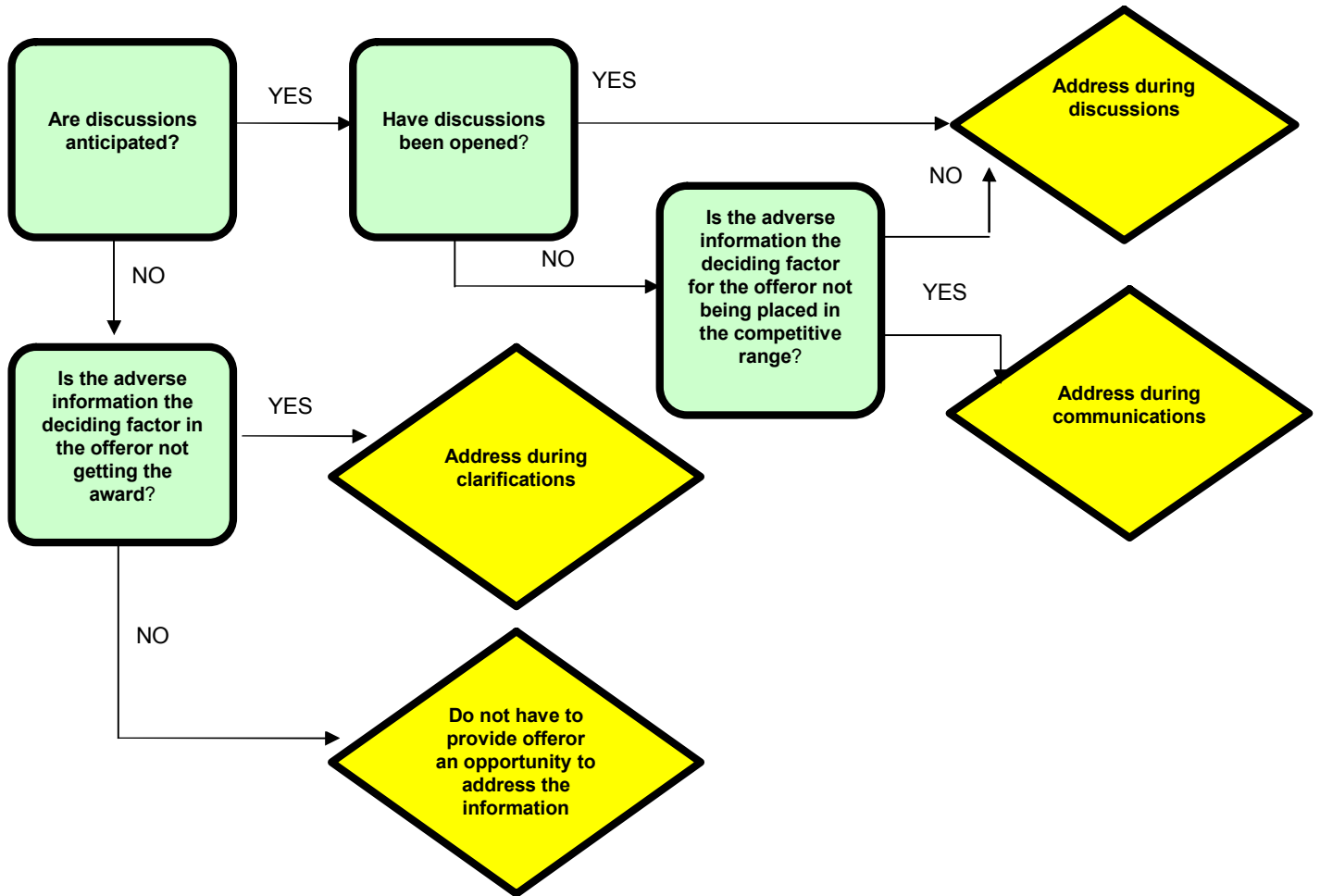
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When adverse past performance information is obtained, as appropriate, contact the respective POC to get further information about the circumstances surrounding the situation. Additionally, when practical, contact at least one other individual to get a second perspective on the contractor's performance on the subject work effort. Consider the context of the performance problems, any mitigating circumstances, the number and severity of the problems, the demonstrated effectiveness of corrective actions taken, and the overall work record.

If there is past performance information that adversely impacts an offeror's proposal, you must provide the offeror an opportunity to address any such information on which it has not had a previous opportunity to comment. Whether this opportunity occurs during clarifications, communications or discussions (See [Figure 7-1](#)) depends upon whether discussions are anticipated and, if they are, if they have been opened. Figure D-1 illustrates when adverse past performance should be addressed.

When addressing adverse past performance information, identify the contract, but in no case identify the name of the individual who provided the information. Summarize the problems with sufficient detail to give the offeror a reasonable opportunity to respond.

**Figure D-1**  
**Decision Model for When to Address Adverse Past Performance**



# APPENDIX E

## PAST PERFORMANCE QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

Normal practice is to use a written questionnaire addressed to points of contact and solicit a response. After questionnaires are received or if there is no response you may initiate an interview. Interview questions/discussion topics should be consistent with the written questionnaire. At the start of the interview, explain its purpose and assure the interviewee anonymity. While you may provide the interviewees with a generic description of the instant requirement, do not release the solicitation number, program description, or other identifying information to the interviewee.

After the interview, prepare a summary of the interview, including the interviewee's name, mailing and electronic addresses, and telephone number; the date and time of the interview; and a description of the contract effort discussed. Send it to the interviewee, stating if he/she does not object to its content by a specified time, you may assume it is correct. If the interviewee indicates it is incorrect, send him/her a corrected summary to verify. If you cannot achieve a satisfactory correction, do not rely on the record.

When using interviews, you may find it beneficial to have at least two evaluators conduct each interview. This will facilitate preparing a complete and comprehensive summary of the interview.

### Figure E-1

### Sample Performance Risk Assessment Questionnaire

(See Appendix H for a Sample Cover Letter that can be sent with the Questionnaire)

Please provide your candid responses. **The information that you provide will be used in the awarding of federal contracts. Therefore, it is important that your information be as factual, accurate and complete as possible to preclude the need for follow-up by the evaluators.** If you do not have knowledge of or experience with the company in question, please forward this Questionnaire to the person who does. **Please return the completed Questionnaire within 3 days.** Thank you.

#### PART I. (To be completed by the Offeror)

<b>A. CONTRACT IDENTIFICATION</b>
-----------------------------------

Contractor/Company Name/Division:

Address:

Program Identification/Title:

Contract Number:

Contract Type:

Prime Contractor Name (if different from the contractor name cited above):

Contract Award Date:

Forecasted or Actual Contract Completion Date:

Nature of the Contractual Effort or Items Purchased:

**B. IDENTIFICATION OF OFFEROR'S REPRESENTATIVE**

Name:

Title:

Date:

Telephone Number:

FAX Number:

Address:

E-mail Address:

**PART II. EVALUATION (To be completed by Point of Contact – Respondent)**

**A. Compliance of Products, Services, Documents, and Related Deliverables to Specification Requirements and Standards of Good Workmanship.**

- ☐ Exceeds Contractual Requirements **(Explanation must be provided in Comments field below)**
- ☐ Meets Contractual Requirements
- ☐ Failed to Meet Contractual Requirements **(Explanation must be provided in Comments field below)**

Comments:

**B. Effectiveness of Project Management (to include use and control of subcontractors).**

- ☐ Exceptional **(Explanation must be provided in Comments field below)**
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory **(Explanation must be provided in Comments field below)**

Comments:

**C. Timeliness of Performance for Services and Product Deliverables, including the Administrative Aspects of Performance.**

- ☐ Exceeds Contractual Requirements **(Explanation must be provided in Comments field below)**
- ☐ Meets Contractual Requirements
- ☐ Failed to Meet Contractual Requirements **(Explanation must be provided in Comments field below)**

Comments:

**D. Effectiveness in Forecasting and Controlling Project Cost.**

- ☐ Exceptional **(Explanation must be provided in Comments field below)**

- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory (**Explanation must be provided in Comments field below**)

Comments:

**E. Commitment to Customer Satisfaction and Business-like Concern for its Customers' Interest.**

- ☐ Exceptional (**Explanation must be provided in Comments field below**)
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory (**Explanation must be provided in Comments field below**)

Comments:

**F. Overall Satisfaction.**

- ☐ Extremely Satisfactory (**Explanation must be provided in Comments field below**)
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory (**Explanation must be provided in Comments field below**)

Comments:

**G. General Comments. Provide any other relevant performance information.**

**H. Other Information Sources. Please provide the following information:**

Are you aware of other relevant past efforts by this company?

If yes, please provide the name and telephone number of a point of contact:

**I. Respondent Identification. Please provide the following information:**

Organization:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Telephone Number

Address:

Fax Number:

E-mail Address:

**PART III. RETURN INFORMATION**

Please return this completed Questionnaire via e-mail to the Contracting Officer identified in the cover letter.

Thank you for your assistance.



## APPENDIX F

# COST REALISM ANALYSIS

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### ***Overview***

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You must perform cost realism analysis when a cost contract is anticipated. In accordance with FAR [Part 15.404-1\(d\)\(3\)](#), you may also perform cost realism on FP incentive contracts, or in exceptional cases, on other competitive FP contracts. Adjustments for the most probable cost estimate should not be based solely on differences from the IGCE. Where performance specifications are used, the IGCE is based on the Government's implicit approach to the work, which may differ from the offerors' approach. Also, the IGCE rates may not be comparable. The technical evaluation should reveal areas where each offeror's approach is inadequate or its resourcing unrealistic, given the proposed approach. The technical evaluators and the cost evaluators should crosswalk technical deficiencies and weaknesses and their impact on cost to assure proper adjustments can be made to the proposed costs. However, this crosswalk should not be performed until after each group has completed their initial evaluation to avoid intentional or unintentional bias.

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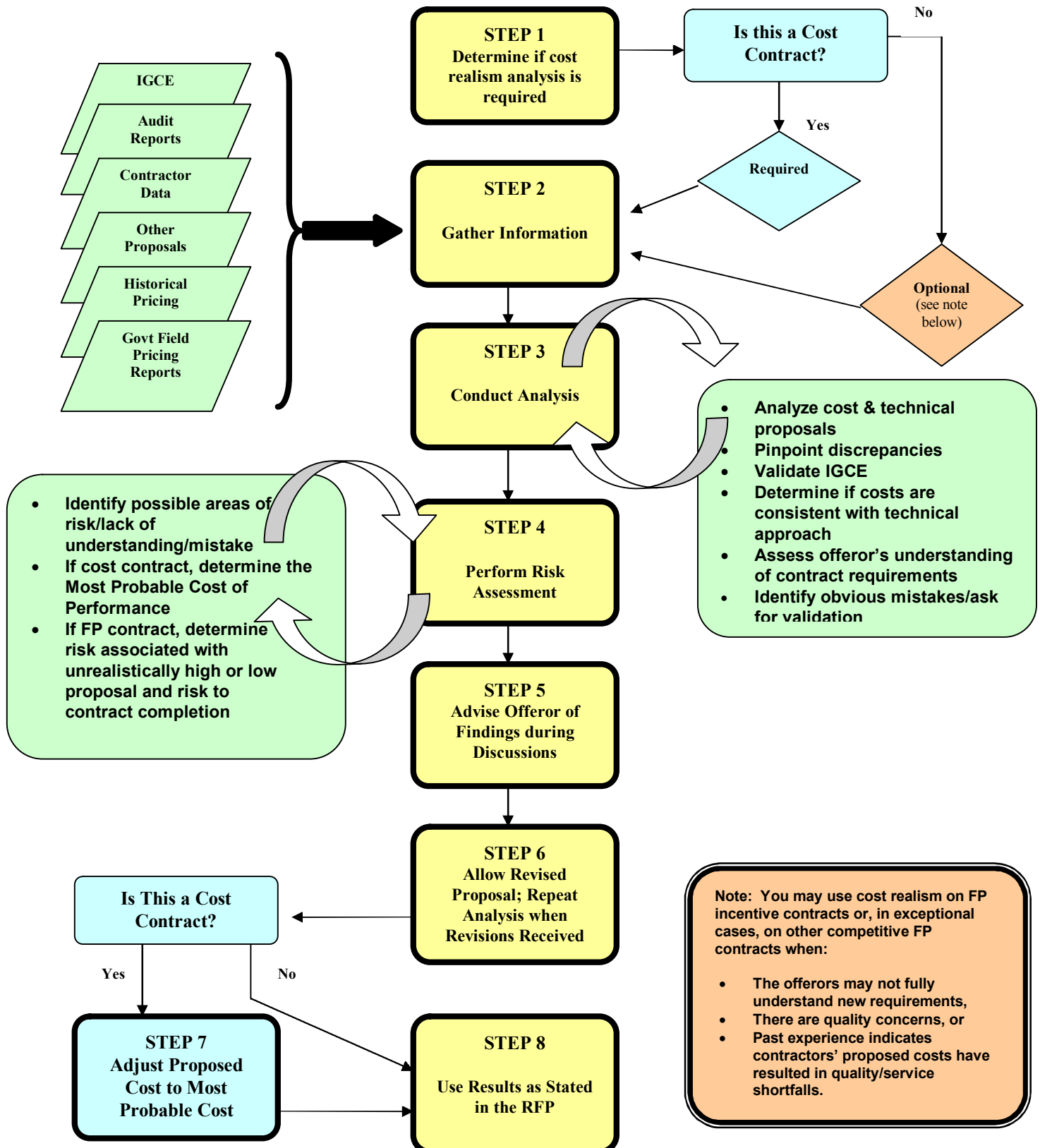
### ***Most Probable Cost Estimate***

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When developing a most probable cost estimate, consider the following points.

- As you collect the information required to evaluate the realism of the offeror's cost (or price) estimate, you are also collecting the information required to develop your own estimate of the most probable contract cost.
- In developing your estimate, adopt the portion of the offeror's estimate that appears realistic and modify the portion of the estimate that you believe is unrealistic. For example, you may accept proposed labor hours and adjust the labor rate based on an audit recommendation. Adjustments may increase or decrease cost estimates.
- Use relevant estimating tools and techniques.
- Conduct meaningful discussions with offerors in the event there are any meaningful adjustments to the offeror's estimated cost.
- As you complete your estimate, clearly document your rationale for any adjustment.

**Figure F-1**  
**Steps Involved in Cost Realism Analysis**



## APPENDIX G

# ON-LINE REVERSE AUCTIONS

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### ***Definition***

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A reverse auction is simply the opposite of a traditional auction. In a traditional auction, the seller offers an item for sale and multiple potential buyers submit sequentially higher bids for the item. Conversely, in a reverse auction, there are multiple sellers of items that compete for the business of a single buyer. During this competition the sellers drive the price of the item down.

### ***CRITERIA FOR USING REVERSE AUCTIONS***

- ***Healthy price competition***
- ***A well-defined requirement***

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### ***Applicability to Best Value Acquisitions***

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Reverse auctions are legal as long as the identity of the bidders is not disclosed. You may use them for trade-off acquisitions as a pricing tool. For example, once you have finished technical discussions, you may conduct a reverse auction to establish the offerors' final prices. Provide these prices, along with the rest of the evaluation results, to the SSA for his/her use in selecting the proposal that represents the best value. A potential benefit is that competition will drive the prices down as the offerors have visibility of the other prices being proposed.

You may use reverse auctions to purchase a variety of products and services. Reverse auctions work especially well on acquisitions of manufactured items. While you can use reverse auctions to buy commodities, these items usually have smaller profit margins and, therefore, the potential benefits are less.

When using reverse auctions in a best value acquisition, ensure the auction process does not drive prices down to the point that the resultant contract does not provide enough incentive for the contractor to provide quality supplies and services.

Use of reverse auctions is appropriate at different points in an acquisition.

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## ***Process***

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On-line reverse auctions are conducted using a variety of procedures and automated tools. An agency may contract with an on-line auction service to conduct the reverse auction or it may conduct the reverse auction itself using commercially-available software. In either case, the reverse auction must be conducted on a secure Web site and you must clearly state in the RFP the ground rules for the auction, particularly when the bidding will start and stop.

The Army has established a reverse auction tool set, which can be accessed through the Army Single Face to Industry Acquisition Business Web site at <https://usave.monmouth.army.mil>. Participation is open to all Army activities.

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## ***Potential Advantages***

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- More bang for the buck due to intense competition
- Reduced acquisition time
- Process is inclusive, transparent and immediate; industry likes these features

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## ***Potential Barriers***

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- Concern over security and privacy
- Culture (resistance to change)
- Lack of trust in the process and Government
- Interoperability issues (e.g., inability to get applications and legacy systems to work together)
- Administrative costs and enabler fees may outweigh price advantages

## APPENDIX H

### SAMPLE SOURCE SELECTION TEMPLATES

TEMPLATE	PAGE
- D&F for Authority to Use Contractor in Source Selection	H-1 through H-3
- Notice to Unsuccessful Offeror (Pre-Award and Post Award)	H-4 through H-7
- Performance Risk Assessment Group (PRAG) Questionnaire Cover Letter	H-8
- Source Selection Appointment Letters	H-9 through H-19
- Source Selection Decision Document	H-20 through H-24
- SSP Template (Cost Contract or FFP w/SSAC)*	H-25 through H-58
- Sample Task	H-59 through H-61

\* This template may also be used for Source Selections that do not utilize a SSAC. In such cases, eliminate references to SSAC in these documents.

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***SAMPLE D&F for Authority to Use Contractor in a Source Selection***

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**NAME OF COMMAND**

COMMAND LETTERHEAD

**DETERMINATIONS AND FINDINGS**

Authority to Use Contractor Support for \_\_\_\_\_  
Solicitation No. \_\_\_\_\_

Upon the basis of the findings and determination which I hereby make pursuant to the authority of 41 U.S.C. 419 (as implemented by Federal Acquisition Regulation Subparts 37.203 and 37.204 and AFARS Subpart 5137.204) contractor support may be utilized for the proposed contract described below.

**FINDINGS**

1. Background: The US Army **REQUIRING ACTIVITY / PM** has been tasked to conduct an acquisition for the **DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENT**. The acquisition shall provide for **NEED FOR GOODS/SERVICES**. The **TYPE OF CONTRACT FFP / COST PLUS / IDIQ, ETC.** contract will be in effect from **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**. A best value source selection will be conducted in support of this acquisition.
2. Program Goals: **SPECIFY PROGRAM GOALS.**
3. Discussions: Offerors will be informed of the non-Government advisors who will assist in the evaluation. The use of non-Government advisors will be strictly controlled. Non-Government advisors will be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement for the **DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENT** solicitation. The chairperson of the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) will monitor non-Governmental advisor activities while in the evaluation area. This support will be limited to specific tasks on an as needed basis, and only in those areas where Government expertise is not available. After the non-Government advisors have completed their particular area of evaluation, they will be released from the evaluation process. All non-Government advisors will only have access to the information corresponding to their area(s) of expertise. They will not have access to the Price section of the proposal. The companies identified herein have agreed not to **engage in the manufacture or production of hardware/services/R&D/Construction** that is related to this effort, to abide by FAR Subpart 9.5, "Organizational Conflicts of Interest," and to refrain from disclosing proprietary information to unauthorized personnel.

A search within the Government to identify available personnel with the required capability and training was unsuccessful. In view of the administrative costs, travel costs and schedule impacts, attempts to locate such personnel within other Federal Agencies were not pursued. Accordingly,

it is requested that the following non-Government advisor(s) be utilized in the evaluation of the proposals.

a. NAME OF CONTRACTOR ORGANIZATION:  
NAME OF INDIVIDUAL

b. NAME OF 2<sup>ND</sup> CONTRACTOR, IF APPLICABLE  
NAME OF 2<sup>ND</sup> INDIVIDUAL, IF APPLICABLE

The above named individual(s) is/are subject matter expert(s) in **EXPLAIN THE EXPERTISE OF THE CONTRACTORS. DO NOT REQUEST CONTRACTOR SUPPORT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES AS THIS IS GENERALIZED AND CAN BE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT. BELOW PROVIDE DETAILS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL BY CONTRACTOR, INDIVIDUAL'S NAME AND SPECIFIC EXPERTISE** in the following areas:

a. CONTRACTOR:  
INDIVIDUAL  
FACTOR/SUBFACTOR AND SPECIFIC AREA TO BE EVALUATED.

b. CONTRACTOR  
INDIVIDUAL  
FACTOR/SUBFACTOR AND SPECIFIC AREA TO BE EVALUATED

If authority to use Contractor Support is approved, the individuals listed above shall be made aware of their responsibilities in accordance with the Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 USC 423), as implemented under Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 3.104 and shall be required to agree to and sign a **NAME OF PROGRAM** Source Selection Participation Agreement.

#### DETERMINATION

Based upon the foregoing justification, and 41 U.S.C. 419, as implemented by Federal Acquisition Regulation Subparts 37.203 and 37.204 and AFARS Subpart 5137.204, I hereby determine that sufficient personnel, with the requisite training and capabilities, are not available at the current time within Federal agencies to provide the required expertise needed for the **PROGRAM NAME** acquisition.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTRACTING OFFICER'S NAME**  
CONTRACTING OFFICER

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

LEGAL CONCURRENCE

**APPROVAL**

In accordance with 41 U.S.C. 419 and as implemented by Federal Acquisition Regulation Subparts 37.203 and 37.204 and AFARS Subpart 5137.204, I hereby approve the use of non-Government advisors to assist in the evaluation of the proposals for **PROGRAM NAME**.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARC NAME**

Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting



---

*Sample Notice to Unsuccessful Offeror (Pre Award)*

---

COMMAND LETTERHEAD

DATE

Contracting Organization Name

SUBJECT: Solicitation Number \_\_\_\_\_, Program Name \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY NAME

ATTN: XXXXXXXXXX

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE & ZIP CODE

Dear XXX:

The Government has completed its initial evaluation of the proposals submitted in response to the subject solicitation and regrets to inform you that your proposal has been excluded from the competitive range and thereby eliminated from the competition. Based on the ratings of your proposal that were derived against all of the evaluation criteria, I have determined that your proposal is outside the competitive range because it is not one of the most highly rated proposals, in accordance with FAR 15.306 (c) (1).

In accordance with Section M of the Solicitation, Basis for Award, the Technical Factor is more important than the Performance Risk Factor, the Performance Risk Factor is more important than the Price Factor, and the Price Factor is significantly more important than the Small Business Participation Plan Factor. The non-price factors when combined are significantly more important than the Price Factor. Section M of the Solicitation, Basis for Award, further states that to receive consideration for award, a rating of no less than Acceptable must be achieved for the Technical Factors and each of its Subfactors. After extensive evaluation, your proposal has been rated *(provide ratings for the Factors and Subfactors of the Offeror and brief explanation/reasons for the ratings)*. Those ratings did not place your proposal among those proposals that were most highly rated. This is based primarily on your *(explain)*.

Based on the above and in accordance with the Evaluation Approach, it has been determined that Corporation Name, Corporation Division is outside the competitive range. Further negotiations concerning this acquisition are not contemplated; revisions to your proposal will not be considered.

You may request a debriefing in writing within three days after receipt of this notice. This debriefing may be delayed until after award if so requested. However, if you do not request a debriefing within those three days, the Government is not obligated to grant either a pre-award or post-award debriefing. Your attention is directed to FAR 15.505 regarding these procedures.

The Government thanks you for your participation in this acquisition and looks forward to your continued interest in future business opportunities at **NAME OF COMMAND**.

Sincerely,

**NAME**  
**Contracting Officer**

---

*Sample Notice to Unsuccessful Offeror (Post Award)*

---

COMMAND LETTERHEAD

DATE

OFFEROR A  
 ATTN: XXXXXXXXXX  
 ADDRESS  
 CITY, STATE & ZIP CODE

Dear XXXXX:

Reference your proposal submitted in response to solicitation XXXXXX-XX-R-XXXX for the  
 SYSTEM OR ITEM TITLE.

Solicitation XXXXXX-XX-R-XXXX was posted to the ASFI/FEDBIZOPS on DATE to be reviewed by industry for purposes of submitting a proposal. Five (5) proposals were received in response to the solicitation. Award was made to NAME AND ADDRESS OF SUCCESSFUL OFFEROR.

The Government's final evaluation of your proposal has resulted in the following ratings and total evaluated price. The ratings and total evaluated price of the successful offeror are provided for your information.

	<u>YOUR OFFER</u>	<u>SUCCESSFUL OFFEROR</u>
TECHNICAL FACTOR	Good	Good
OPERATING REQUIREMENTS SUB-FACTOR	Good	Outstanding
RELIABILITY SUB-FACTOR	Good	Good
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS SUB- FACTOR	Good	Good
SCHEDULE FACTOR	Outstanding	Good
PERFORMANCE RISK FACTOR	Low	Low
PRICE FACTOR	\$XXXXXXXXXXXX	\$XXXXXXXXXXXX
(Total Evaluated Price)		

Pursuant to FAR 15.506, you are afforded the opportunity to request a debriefing regarding the evaluation of your proposal. Your request for a debriefing shall be submitted in writing to the

undersigned Contracting Officer. Please specify the names and positions of the representatives of your company and team who will attend and include written questions planned for this session.

The Government thanks you for your interest in the **NAME OF ITEM** and looks forward to your continued participation on future acquisition programs. Should you have any other questions concerning this acquisition kindly contact the undersigned at **(XXX) XXX-XXXX**.

Sincerely,

**NAME**  
**Contracting Officer**

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*Sample PRAG Questionnaire Cover Letter*

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COMMAND LETTERHEAD

Dear Sir or Madam:

**THE NAME OF COMMAND** is acquiring \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfill its mission. Requirements include:  
(List as Required).

The US Army is conducting a performance risk assessment in anticipation of a possible contract award. An offeror interested in proposing on this work has identified you as a Point of Contact (POC) on a past or present contract which the offeror deems relevant to this effort. We are, therefore, requesting your assistance in completing the attached Performance Risk Assessment Questionnaire so that we may evaluate the offeror in the area of past performance. The Questionnaire has been developed for ease of electronic completion. Please provide your comments regarding the overall assessment of the offeror's performance on the contract identified and any additional information that your organization deems relevant to our evaluation team. It is important that your information be as factual, accurate and complete as possible to preclude the need for follow-up by the evaluators.

Please complete and submit the Questionnaire within 3 days of receipt via e-mail to the undersigned Contracting Officer at \_\_\_\_\_. If you have any questions relative to the enclosed Questionnaire, please contact me.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

**Name**

Contracting Officer

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*Sample Source Selection Appointment Letters*

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AMSTA-CG or COMMAND LETTERHEAD

MEMORANDUM FOR XXXXXXXX, Requiring Office (XXXX-XXX-XX)

SUBJECT: Appointment as Source Selection Authority

1. Acting in my capacity as Head of the Contracting Activity or the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting (as appropriate) for the XXXXX Command, I hereby designate you, XXXXX, the Source Selection Authority (SSA) for the XXXXX Program. This appointment is made per AFARS 5115.303.

2. The XXXXXXXX Area is responsible for conducting two of the Army's Advanced Technology Demonstration programs. These programs will push the state-of-the-art as a step toward transition to the XXXXX program. To support these efforts, the XXXXX Area will competitively award a contract to perform both the integration of technology testbeds and the experimentation activities associated with these testbeds. A (type/length) contract is anticipated, with a potential total value of \$XX.XM.

3. As SSA, you are responsible for the proper conduct of the source selection process in accordance with applicable regulations and shall:

- Supervise and approve the development of the source selection criteria (Sections L, M and adjectival definitions)
- Ensure SSEB leadership possesses appropriate skills and experience targeted to their SSEB duties; this leadership should be involved in the establishment of the selection criteria
- Establish an evaluation schedule for the SSEB commensurate with the complexity of the evaluation; actively manage the achievement of the assigned schedule
- Where discussions are conducted, review the interim evaluation results and approve the competitive range determination of the contracting officer
- Review the content and scope of discussions/negotiations with offerors
- Ensure meaningful discussions have been conducted; authorize closing of discussions; and authorize request for final proposal revisions
- Review the final evaluation results; conduct trade-offs in accordance with the selection criteria; select best value offeror(s); and document your selection decision in a Source Selection Decision Memorandum
- Ensure that any evaluation results presented to you are substantiated and are consistent with the announced evaluation criteria

At all times, ensure conflicts of interest, as well as the appearance of such conflicts, are scrupulously avoided; there is no premature or unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or other

source selection information. You must exercise extreme care to safeguard and protect sensitive information, including the identity of the individuals involved in the source selection evaluation.

4. (NAME), Associate Director of the XXXX Acquisition Center, should serve on the Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), as well as any other individual you believe is necessary. You may also choose to appoint subject matter experts as advisors, as appropriate.

5. I am advised that you have discussed your appointment with the XXXXX Command Ethics Counselor and you have received an ethics briefing and the Ethics Counselor has conducted the appropriate screening of your financial disclosure report and there are no financial conflicts of interest that would preclude you from performing the duties of the SSA. You are also to consult with an Ethics Counselor should any situation arise which might result in a conflict of interest, or even the appearance of one.

6. This appointment of the SSA for the XXXX Program is to you personally, and you may not re-delegate this authority. If, for any reason, you are unable to complete your duties as SSA, please notify me promptly.

XXXXXXXX

Major General, US Army  
Commanding

OR (as appropriate)

PARC NAME

Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting

COMMAND LETTERHEAD

MEMORANDUM FOR (SSAC Member)

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Appointment, Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), (Name of Program)

1. As the Source Selection Authority for the subject competitive acquisition, I hereby appoint you to the Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC). Your temporary duty assignment was requested because of your demonstrated ability and qualifications.
2. Your appointment as a SSAC member is effective immediately and terminates upon dissolution of the Source Selection Advisory Council. Your presence will be required at meetings and conferences and you will complete whatever work is necessary for timely completion of the council's mission. Relief from this assignment will be granted only in the event of a demonstrated emergency.
3. Temporary release from your duties for return to your parent organization may occur. However, you will be called upon to provide assistance and clarification of matters as necessary throughout the process.
4. In connection with your duties as a SSAC member, you will have access to confidential business information and proprietary data submitted by the offerors in response to the Request for Proposal. The Federal Acquisition Regulation, under which this source selection is being conducted, requires you to safeguard this information and not release it to any person outside of the source selection process. The laws of the United States prohibit the unauthorized release of confidential business information and proprietary data. There are criminal and administrative penalties for violation of these laws.
5. The release of any information submitted by an offeror or any information concerning the evaluation of the proposals to any person outside of the source selection and proposal evaluation process will have a serious adverse impact on our ability to continue with the source selection process. Such a release of information could serve as the basis for a lawsuit against the United States and delay the Source Selection for many months. The responsibility for protecting this sensitive information and ensuring that it is not released to unauthorized persons rests with you.



OFFICE SYMBOL

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Appointment, Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), (Name of Program)

6. Your specific responsibilities are outlined at Enclosure 1; a Source Selection Participation Agreement is at Enclosure 2. You are requested to complete Enclosure 2 and return it to:

(Contracting Officer's Name)  
ADDRESS

7. I know you are aware of the importance of this acquisition. Your professional efforts will ensure the impartial and equitable evaluation of all offerors proposals.

2 Encls

Name  
Source Selection Authority

---

***SSAC RESPONSIBILITIES***

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The SSAC is responsible for the following:

- a. Review and approve the evaluation criteria prior to their approval by the SSA.
- b. Approve membership of the SSEB.
- c. Ensure that appropriate actions are taken consistent with the FAR to obtain competition in the selection process.
- d. Review the solicitation and recommend that the SSA authorize release.
- e. Monitor the SSEB and provide guidance as necessary.
- f. Provide briefings to the SSA, as required, on the progress of the evaluation process.
- g. As required, meet with and discuss evaluation findings with appropriate members.
- h. After the initial, and any subsequent evaluation by the SSEB, validate the strengths, weaknesses and deficiencies prior to or concurrent with the SSA approving a competitive range determination.
- i. In conjunction with the SSA, meet, at a minimum, to determine that meaningful discussions are concluded prior to the Request for Final Proposal Revisions.
- j. Identify discriminating factors amongst offerors to aid the SSA in the selection process.
- k. Review the source selection decision document for the SSA's signature, if requested by the SSA.

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***SAMPLE SSEB CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENT LETTER***

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OFFICE SYMBOL

MEMORANDUM FOR (SSEB Chairman)

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Appointment, Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) Chairman, (Name of Program)

1. As the Source Selection Authority for the subject competitive acquisition, I hereby appoint you to the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) in the capacity of SSEB Chairman. Your temporary duty assignment as Chairman of the SSEB was requested because of your demonstrated ability and qualifications.
2. Your appointment is effective immediately and terminates upon dissolution of the Source Selection Evaluation Board. Your presence will be required at meetings and conferences and you will assign whatever work is necessary for timely completion of the board's mission. Relief from this assignment will be granted only in the event of a demonstrated emergency.
3. During the term of this appointment the SSEB will be your primary responsibility. Temporary release from your SSEB duties for return to your parent organization may occur when circumstances warrant.
4. In connection with your duties as a Chairman of the SSEB, you will have access to confidential business information and proprietary data submitted by the offerors in response to the Request for Proposal. The Federal Acquisition Regulation, under which this source selection is being conducted, requires you to safeguard this information and not release it to any person outside of the source selection process. The laws of the United States prohibit the unauthorized release of confidential business information and proprietary data. There are criminal and administrative penalties for violation of these laws.
5. The release of any information submitted by an offeror or any information concerning the evaluation of the proposals to any person outside of the source selection and proposal evaluation process will have a serious adverse impact on our ability to continue with the source selection process. Such a release of information could serve as the basis for a lawsuit against the United States and delay source selection process for many months. The responsibility for protecting this sensitive information and ensuring that it is not released to unauthorized persons rests with you.

OFFICE SYMBOL

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Appointment, Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB)

Chairman, (Name of Program)

6. Your specific responsibilities are outlined at Enclosure 1; a Source Selection Participation Agreement is at Enclosure 2. You are requested to complete Enclosure 2 and return it to:

(Contracting Officer)

ADDRESS

7. I know you are aware of the importance of this acquisition. Your professional efforts will ensure the impartial and equitable evaluation of all offerors proposals.

2 Encls

Name

Source Selection Authority

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***SAMPLE SSEB CHAIRMAN RESPONSIBILITIES***

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The SSEB Chairman has the responsibility to:

- a. Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of competitive proposals in an impartial and equitable manner, and the production of summary facts and findings required in the conduct of the source selection process.
- b. Review all aspects of all proposals and shall fully participate in the assignment of adjectival ratings and prepare the written assessment of the SSEB.
- c. Assure that the SSEB members understand the criteria, format and administrative procedures for the evaluation of proposals so that there is a uniformity of approach in the rating effort.
- d. Be responsive to the guidance and special instructions of the SSAC and SSA.
- e. Provide such briefings and consultations, as may be required by the SSAC and SSA.
- f. Assure the adequacy and overall quality of the narrative justification for the evaluation results.
- g. Recruit competent individuals for assignment to the board.
- h. Select and assign the Factor chairpersons.
- i. Require the assigned members attendance at the meetings and conferences of the board, and assign work necessary for the accomplishment of its mission.
- j. Relieve members from assignment in the event of a demonstrated emergency or for other cause.
- k. Require members to work overtime, when necessary.
- l. Select the meeting site for board deliberations and arrange for the necessary support.
- m. Assure the safeguarding of sensitive information used by the board.
- n. Organize an advance party for timely preparation of the worksite before arrival of the main body of the board members.
- o. Arrange for the needed secretarial, security, editing, and publication staffs at the worksite.
- p. Plan the security requirements of the board and the worksite and supervise their accomplishment when the board is convened.

- q. Assign members to the principal committees and subcommittees of the board.
- r. Oversee the briefing of new members regarding their duties.
- s. Establish the agenda and the schedule for SSEB meetings.
- t. Coordinate the work of technical, past performance, small business, cost and other committees so that the interface and trade-off possibilities between time, cost and technical performance are adequately evaluated.
- u. Identify policy issues and major questions requiring decision by the SSEB and SSAC.
- v. Supervise the preparation of needed documentation to support evaluation findings with major emphasis on clarity, logic and succinctness.
- w. Formulate the agenda for SSEB meetings.
- x. Record the deliberations of the meeting and document the conclusions of the meeting.
- y. Transmit to the KO responsible for making the awards the appropriate SSEB records.
- z. Prepare the lessons-learned report and obtain the SSA approval prior to its release.

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*Sample SSEB Member Appointment Memorandum*

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OFFICE SYMBOL

MEMORANDUM FOR (SSEB Member)

SUBJECT: Assignment to the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB), (Name of Program)

1. As the Chairman of the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) for the subject competitive acquisition, you are hereby assigned as a member of the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB). Your assignment to the SSEB is based upon your demonstrated ability and qualifications.
2. As an assigned member to the SSEB you will be required to serve on a full-time basis. Your presence will be required at meetings and conferences and you will complete whatever work is necessary for timely completion of the board's mission. Relief from this assignment will be granted only in the event of a demonstrated emergency.
3. During the term of this appointment the SSEB will be your primary responsibility. Temporary release from your SSEB duties for return to your parent organization may occur when circumstances warrant.
4. This assignment will take effect upon receipt of this letter and will terminate upon formal dissolution of the SSEB.
5. In connection with your duties as a member of the SSEB, you will have access to confidential business information and proprietary data submitted by the offerors in response to the Request for Proposal. The Federal Acquisition Regulation, under which this source selection is being conducted, requires you to safeguard this information and not release it to any person outside of the source selection process. The laws of the United States prohibit the unauthorized release of confidential business information and proprietary data. There are criminal and administrative penalties for violation of these laws.
6. The release of any information submitted by an offeror or any information concerning the evaluation of the proposals to any person outside of the source selection and proposal evaluation process will have a serious adverse impact on our ability to continue with the source selection process. Such a release of information could serve as the basis for a lawsuit against the United States and delay the source selection process for many months. The responsibility for protecting this sensitive information and ensuring that it is not released to unauthorized persons rests with you.

OFFICE SYMBOL

SUBJECT: Assignment to the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB), (Name of Program)

7. Your specific responsibilities as a member of the Source Selection Evaluation Board include the following:

- a. Conduct an in-depth review and evaluation of each proposal against the solicitation requirements and the approved evaluation criteria;
- b. Prepare and submit the SSEB's evaluation reports to the SSAC and SSA;
- c. Respond to special instructions from the SSEB Chairperson, SSAC and SSA; and
- d. Support the debriefings of unsuccessful offerors.

8. A Source Selection Participation Agreement is at Enclosure 1. You are requested to complete the Enclosure 1 return it to:

(Contracting Officer)  
ADDRESS

9. I know you are aware of the importance of this acquisition. Your professional efforts will ensure the impartial and equitable evaluation of all offerors proposals.

Encl

(Appointed Chairman)  
Chairman  
Source Selection Evaluation Board

APPROVED:

(Appointed Chairman)  
Chairman  
Source Selection Advisory Council



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***SAMPLE SOURCE SELECTION DECISION DOCUMENT***

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OFFICE SYMBOL

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Source Selection Decision Document,  
Solicitation Number XXXXXX-XX-R-XXXX, Program Name.

1. Reference is made to subject solicitation for Program Name. The Program Name is a state-of-the-art, compact vision enhancing system for land-based warriors. The solicitation consists of a requirement for a one year basic contract for a quantity of XXX including warranties and a data item for a Safety Assessment Report, with an option for up to XXXX including warranties.
2. A Request For Proposal (RFP) for the above requirement was issued on 24 May 20XX, with proposals due on 23 June 20XX. Three (3) amendments were issued with no impact to the original proposal due date. Amendment Number 0001 was issued on 14 June 20XX to clarify information previously provided in the original solicitation. Amendment Number 0002 was issued on 16 June 20XX to add XXX marking information to the Statement of Work. Amendment Number 0003 was issued on 18 June 20XX to delete FAR Clause 52.215-4, entitled "Type of Business Organization" from the solicitation. Three (3) responses were received and identified as Offerors A, B and C to protect source selection information.
3. The solicitation utilized the best value concept. The award is to be made based on the best overall (i.e., best value) proposal that is determined to be the most beneficial to the Government, with appropriate consideration given to the three (3) evaluation factors: Technical, Past Performance Risk and Price. Technical is moderately more important than Performance Risk, which is slightly more important than Price. The non-price factors, when combined, are significantly more important than the Price factor. To receive consideration for award, a rating of no less than "Acceptable" must be achieved for both Technical subfactors and the offeror's proposed price must meet the specified Cost As an Independent Variable (CAIV) thresholds. Offerors were cautioned that the award may not necessarily be made to the lowest price offered.
4. On 6 October 20XX, it was determined that all three offerors (A, B and C) would be included in the competitive range. See Competitive Range dated 6 October 20XX. After performing a review and analysis of the technical evaluation and other factors pertaining to the proposals received in response to the subject solicitation in accordance with FAR 15.305 and reviewing the requirements of FAR 15.306, discussions were conducted with all of the offerors (A, B and C) who were determined to be within the competitive range. Items For Negotiations (IFNs) were issued on 7 October 20XX to all of the offerors determined to be within the competitive range. Responses were received by this office on 19 October 20XX. A second round of IFNs was issued to Offerors A, B and C on November 10, 20XX. Responses were received by this office from all three (3) offerors on 17 November 20XX. The referenced responses were evaluated by the

Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) in accordance with the evaluation criteria contained in the section entitled, "Evaluation Factors For Award," of the solicitation. Offerors A, B and C have met all of the Key Performance Parameters (KPPs). Requests for Final Proposal Revisions (FPR) were issued on 30 November 20XX and responses were received in this office on 7 December 20XX.

5. Below are the offerors' ratings for Technical (including the Subfactors), Past Performance Risk, and Final Evaluated Price. Offerors A, B and C did not submit Technical or Performance Risk changes to their Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs), however, Offerors B and C did revise their Prices.

	<u><b>OFFEROR A</b></u>	<u><b>OFFEROR B</b></u>	<u><b>OFFEROR C</b></u>
<b>TECHNICAL</b>	ACCEPTABLE	OUTSTANDING	ACCEPTABLE
Performance	ACCEPTABLE	OUTSTANDING	ACCEPTABLE
Quality Validation	ACCEPTABLE	GOOD	ACCEPTABLE
<b>PAST PERFORM RISK</b>	LOW	LOW	LOW
<b>PRICE</b>	\$1,486,450	\$1,433,846	\$1,258,846

6. Based upon the findings of the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB), the proposals have been compared giving appropriate consideration to the evaluation criteria set forth in the solicitation and Source Selection Plan and their relative importance. Based on this comparison, I have determined that the basic proposal submitted by Offeror B, is the best overall proposal and most beneficial to the Government.

7. The SSEB findings show that Offeror B has a significantly better Technical proposal than Offerors A and C, with significantly better ratings in both Technical Subfactors. Offerors A, B and C received Low Risk ratings for the Past Performance Risk Factor with Past Performance Risk being slightly more important than Price and Technical being moderately more important than Performance Risk. The price of Offeror B falls between Offeror A's and Offeror C's with Price being the least important factor.

Performance Subfactor (Technical Factor)

Offeror A's proposal had two of the four desired enhancements which included reduced weight and extended battery life of 9 hours of continuous use, however, many concerns arose with the design and use of their system. The battery to be used with their system is a lithium battery that is not readily available in the field. Whereas, the batteries to be used with Offeror B's and C's systems are commercially available and are readily available and currently used in the field. Offeror A had many disadvantages regarding the design and use of their system, including a plastic tab adjustment design which presented the potential for a major field safety issue. Offeror A provided an incomplete sample hardware submission which required some risk be assessed to the offeror's technical proposal. Offeror A provided a minimal Performance Specification which means latent defects were possible in their system.

Offeror B's proposed approach is of very low risk due to the extensive detail and the numerous advantages provided regarding the design and use of their proposed system. Offeror B proposed three of the four desired enhancements which included a reduced weight, extended battery life of 22 hours of continuous use and a six (6) year warranty. In addition to these three enhancements, Offeror B's XXX displayed a focal adjustment of 37 lrm, as well as a superior mean-time-to-failure (MTTF) rate. One minor concern was the potential for negligible damage to the XXX safety clip design. Offeror B proposed a preset alignment feature which would further reduce the "time for use" requirement. Offeror B also proposed a reduce XXX weight. The weight reduction offered was a 1.25-ounce reduction to the KPP.

Offeror C's proposal had four out of four desired enhancements which included reduced weight, extended battery life of 6 hours of continuous use and a three year warranty, however, there are some concerns with the design and use of their system. Even though Offeror C has offered four of the four enhancements, the evaluation of their sample hardware did not confirm Offeror C's proposed enhancements. The test results of the submitted sample hardware did not confirm Offeror C's written proposal. The sample hardware tests showed that Offeror C's sample hardware could not comply with two of the four Key Performance Parameters (KPPs) which causes concern in the design and use of their system. Based on the above information along with other disadvantages identified with Offeror C's design and system use, the offeror's approach could not be confirmed and, therefore, the risk associated with their proposal was considered moderate to high.

### **Quality Validation Subfactor (Technical Factor)**

Offeror A submitted a complete Quality Validation Plan, but with minimal reliability standards. Additionally, there is some concern regarding Offeror A's manufacturing subcontractor meeting the specified quality system requirement.

Offeror B has proposed an exceptional Quality Validation Plan which included a comprehensive Initial Production Test Plan (IPT) and Quality Conformance Inspection (QCI) plan which included a broad range of environmental and performance tests at reasonable intervals. Offeror B's proposed Quality Validation Plan provided detailed test descriptions and involves very little risk.

Offeror C proposed an adequate Quality Validation Plan, but with minimal details regarding the IPT and QCI and very limited sample lot quantities. Offeror C has proposed minimal environmental testing after the initial IPT which concerns the Government because this lack of testing may lead to field failures under typical operational conditions, therefore there is significant risk associated with this Offeror's Quality Validation Plan proposal.

### **Past Performance Risk Factor**

Offeror A had approximately thirty (30) relevant contracts and/or purchase orders with production quantities ranging from 1 to 1,500. All contract schedules were met for all thirty relevant contracts. Feedback also indicated that Offeror A has good business relations, and works hard to ensure that there are no problems and the customer is satisfied.

Offeror B had approximately fifteen (15) relevant contracts with delivery quantities totaling 20 to 32,116 production units. During late 20XX and early 20XX, the offeror had only

one supplier of diopter adjusters (DAs) and because of shortages suffered minor delivery delays on several contracts. As a corrective action, the offeror now routinely purchases DAs from 5 vendors. This action sufficiently mitigates the risk of future shortages of DAs. Responses indicate that all of the technical requirements have been met, and that the offeror has an excellent record of business-like concern for the interests of their customers.

Offeror C had two (2) relevant contracts with delivery quantities totaling 6 to 20 production units. Responses indicate that Offeror C met delivery requirements on schedule, and worked with the Government to incorporate requested improvements. Even though Offeror C had very limited delivery production quantities with the Government, a 20XX pre-award survey indicated that Offeror C had taken the appropriate steps to be able to produce the volume of units required for the contract. A risk, nevertheless, remains since this offeror has yet to demonstrate its ability to produce such quantities.

### Price Factor

The Price Factor is evaluated utilizing each offeror's Total Evaluate Price (TEP). TEP equals the Evaluated Basic CAIV Price, plus the Evaluated Option CAIV Price, plus the Safety Assessment Report (SAR) Price. The findings of the SSEB provided the following evaluated prices:

	<u>Offeror A</u>	<u>Offeror B</u>	<u>Offeror C</u>
<b>PRICE</b>	\$1,486,450	\$1,433,846	\$1,258,846

### Summary

Offeror A's sample hardware submission was incomplete and, therefore, it is difficult to confirm the performance and use of their proposed system. Additionally, there were several problems with the hardware that was submitted for evaluation which if these problems occurred in the field raise a major readiness issue. Offeror B provided an overall outstanding technical proposal with the least amount of risk. The evaluation of the sample hardware for Offeror B confirms the design and performance of the system defined in their proposal. Offeror C's sample hardware failed to perform as specified in the Offeror's proposal and the Government was unable to verify that the Offeror's proposed system could meet two of the four KPPs. As discussed in previous paragraphs of this document and extensively detailed in the evaluation reports, Offeror B's Technical proposal (Outstanding) and the advantages associated with it is clearly superior to the technical proposals submitted by both Offeror A (Acceptable) and Offeror C (Acceptable). Offeror B's Past Performance Risk assessment (Low) is similar to that of Offeror A and C (Low). In addition, it is worth noting that Offeror B has substantially more relevant performance history than Offeror C. Offeror B's evaluated Price is lower than that of Offeror A and is approximately \$175,000.00 higher than Offeror C. The technical benefits of Offeror B's proposal far outweighs the savings in price associated with Offeror C's proposal.

8. Based upon the findings of the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) and the Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), I have compared the proposals giving appropriate consideration to the evaluation criteria set forth in the solicitation and their relative importance.

Based upon this comparison of the proposals and a detailed assessment of the advantages and disadvantages associated with each, I have determined that the proposal submitted by Offeror B provides the best overall value to the Government. Accordingly, award will be made to Offeror B for the system set forth in their proposal.

**NAME**

Source Selection Authority

---

***SAMPLE  
SOURCE SELECTION PLAN***

---

For the

(Title of Program)

***THIS SAMPLE IS APPROPRIATE FOR USE WITH COST PLUS OR FIXED PRICE  
ACQUISITIONS THAT:***

- A. UTILIZE A SOURCE SELECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSAC);***
- B. UTILIZE ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS;***
- C. USE ORAL DISCUSSIONS.***

***{DATE}***

**Coordination Page**

Submitted by:

---

Concurrence:

---

Contracting Officer

---

Legal Counsel

---

SSEB Chairperson

---

SSAC Chairperson

Approval:

---

Source Selection Authority

---

Date

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## SECTION I

### OVERVIEW

#### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

*{This paragraph should include a brief description of the supplies/services and the mission and performance requirements}*

#### B. ACQUISITION APPROACH

This is a competitive acquisition for the award of a *{type of contract}* contract. Award will be made to the best overall proposal, which is determined to be the most beneficial to the Government.

*{Additional information relevant to the acquisition approach}*

## SECTION II

### SOLICITATION PROVISIONS

#### A. BASIS FOR AWARD

The award will be made based on the best overall (i.e., best value) proposal that is determined to be the most beneficial to the Government, with appropriate consideration given to the *{number of}* evaluation factors: *{Technical, Performance Risk, Cost, and Small Business Participation Plan are required}*. *{Relative importance of the factors, such as, the Technical factor is significantly more important than the Performance Risk factor, which is slightly more important than the Cost factor, which is significantly more important than the Small Business Participation Plan factor. The non-Cost factors combined are significantly more important than the Cost factor}*. To receive consideration for award, a rating of no less than “Acceptable” must be achieved for the *{“drop dead” factor/sub-factors, such as Technical factor, all Technical sub-factors and the Small Business Participation Plan factor}*. Offerors are cautioned that the award may not necessarily be made to the lowest cost offered.

#### B. FACTORS AND SUB-FACTORS TO BE EVALUATED

1. FACTOR I – TECHNICAL. *{Relative importance of sub-factors, such as sub-factor (a) is slightly more important than sub-factors (b) and (c) individually. Sub-factors (b) and (c) are equally important, and each is significantly more important than sub-factor (d)}*.

a. *{List sub-factors}*

2. FACTOR II – PERFORMANCE RISK.

3. FACTOR III – COST OR PRICE (WHICHEVER IS APPROPRIATE).

4. FACTOR IV – SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION PLAN

#### C. EVALUATION APPROACH

All proposals shall be subject to evaluation by a team of Government and *{and non-Government advisors from the following companies: [name of support contractors]}*.

1. TECHNICAL EVALUATION APPROACH (APPROPRIATE FOR COST TYPE).

The evaluation process will consider the following:

*{Carefully review and consider the appropriateness of the criteria for your particular acquisition. The following are examples}*

a. Understanding of the Problems. The proposal will be evaluated to determine the extent to which it demonstrates a clear understanding of all features involved in solving the problems and meeting the requirements; and the extent to which uncertainties are identified and resolutions proposed.

b. Feasibility of Approach. The proposal will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the proposed approach is workable and the end results achievable. The proposal will be evaluated to determine the extent to which successful performance is contingent upon proven devices and techniques that do not require excessive development. The proposal will be evaluated to determine whether the offeror's methods and approach in meeting the requirements in a timely manner provide the Government with a high level of confidence of successful completion. The proposal will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the offeror is expected to be able to successfully complete the proposed tasks and technical requirements within the required schedule.

c. Flexibility. The proposal will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the approach facilitates the implementation of both cost effective and simplified enhancements, and unanticipated future changes to the overall system.

1. TECHNICAL EVALUATION APPROACH EXAMPLE (APPROPRIATE FOR FFP TYPE). The evaluation process will consider the following:

***{Carefully review and consider the appropriateness of the criteria for your particular acquisition. The following are examples}***

a. Adequacy of Response. The proposal will be evaluated to determine whether the offeror's methods and approach have adequately and completely considered, defined, and satisfied the requirements specified in the solicitation. The proposal will be evaluated to determine the extent to which each requirement of the solicitation has been addressed in the proposal in accordance with the proposal submission section of the solicitation.

b. Feasibility of Approach. The proposal will be evaluated to determine whether the offeror's methods and approach to meeting the solicitation requirements provide the Government with a high level of confidence of successful completion within the required schedule. ***{An assessment of the degree of confidence provided by the proposed verification approaches/methods will also be included.}*** In the event that enhancements are proposed, the enhancements will be evaluated to determine whether the approach taken is feasible and will result in an end product that fully meets or exceeds the RFP requirements.

c. Sample Hardware. ***{If required, sample hardware will be used to aid in the assessment of the offeror's ability to produce the systems as proposed and to facilitate assessment of any proposed enhancements and their potential benefit to the soldier. Sample hardware will be evaluated with respect to {complete}.}***

2. PERFORMANCE RISK EVALUATION APPROACH. The Performance Risk evaluation will assess the relative risks associated with an offeror's likelihood of success in performing the solicitation's requirements as indicated by that offeror's record of past performance. In this context, "offeror" refers to the proposed prime contractor and all proposed major subcontractors. A major subcontractor is defined as one who will be providing critical hardware/services or whose subcontract is for more than **XX%** of the total proposed price. In either case, the prime contractor and proposed major subcontractors will be assessed individually and the results will then be assessed in their totality to derive the offeror's Performance Risk rating.

a. The Government will conduct a performance risk assessment based on the quality, relevancy and recency of the offeror's past performance, as well as that of its major subcontractors, as it relates to the probability of successful accomplishment of the required effort. Areas of relevance include *{for example, development and production efforts of electro-mechanical systems and components that support integration of electro-optical and electronic devices into vehicles and other associated platform.}* When assessing performance risk, the Government will focus its inquiry on the past performance of the offeror and its proposed major subcontractors as it relates to all solicitation requirements. These requirements include all aspects of schedule, performance and supportability, including the offeror's record of: 1) conforming to specifications and standards of good workmanship; 2) maintaining program execution within cost; 3) adherence to contract schedules, including the administrative aspects of performance (COST TYPE); 4) ability to resolve technical and manufacturing problems quickly and effectively; 5) business-like concern for the interest of its customers; and 6) establishing and maintaining adequate management of subcontractors; 7) quality of product delivered as reflected by returns of product to the vendor for repair (FFP TYPE) .

b. Offerors are cautioned that in conducting the performance risk assessment, the Government may use data provided in the offeror's proposal and data obtained from other sources. Since the Government may not necessarily interview all of the sources provided by the offerors, it is incumbent upon the offerors to explain the relevance of the data provided. Offerors are reminded that while the Government may elect to consider data obtained from other sources, the burden of proving low performance risk rests with the offerors.

3. COST EVALUATION APPROACH (normally for cost type contracts). The Government will evaluate the realism of the offeror's proposed costs in relation to the offeror's specific technical approach. The offeror's proposed cost will be evaluated by determining what the Government predicts the offeror's approach would most probably cost the Government when the work performed under the contract is completed. To the degree that the Government's most probable cost estimate exceeds the offeror's proposed cost, the cost will be adjusted upward for the purposes of evaluation only.

3. PRICE EVALUATION APPROACH (normally for fixed priced type contracts).

a. The Government will evaluate offers for award purposes by adding the total of all CLIN/SLIN prices, including all options.

*{Carefully review and consider whether additional price evaluation criteria are necessary for your particular acquisition. For example if range quantities are being utilized, then the sample language below may be appropriate.}*

b. If range quantity prices are offered for the basic quantity or option quantities, then the total evaluated price for each program year option will be calculated by computing a weighted average price and multiplying the weighted average price by the maximum quantity that can be ordered under the option (as specified in the solicitation). A weighted average price will be calculated as follows:

(1) Each range price will be multiplied by the maximum quantity in that respective range; i.e., maximum range quantity.

(2) The extended amounts will be summed and divided by the sum of the maximum quantity in each range. The result will be the weighted average unit price.

(3) The weighted average unit price will be multiplied by the maximum option quantity required in the solicitation. The result will be the total evaluated option price.

EXAMPLE:

<u>RANGE</u>	<u>OFFER</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
1-10		\$20
11-30		\$15
31-60		\$10

#### Calculations

1. Multiply range price by the maximum range quantity.

<u>Price</u>	<u>Max Qty</u>	<u>Amount</u>
\$20	10	\$200
\$15	30	\$450
\$10	<u>60</u>	<u>\$600</u>
	100	\$1250

2. Divide the sum of the extended amounts (\$1250) by the sum of the total maximum quantity in each range (100)

$$\frac{\$1250}{100} = \$12.50 = \text{Weighted Average Unit Price}$$

3. Multiply the weighted average unit price by the maximum option quantity.

$$\$12.50 \times 60 = \$750 = \text{Total Evaluated Option Price}$$

4. SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION PLAN EVALUATION APPROACH. All offerors (both large and small businesses) will be evaluated on the level of small business commitment that they are demonstrating for the proposed acquisition, and their prior level of commitment to utilizing small businesses in performance of prior contracts. The following shall evidence small business participation:

- a. The extent to which such firms, as defined in FAR Part 19, are specifically identified in proposals;
- b. The extent of commitment to use such firms (enforceable commitments will be weighted more heavily than non-enforceable ones);
- c. The complexity and variety of the work small firms are to perform;
- d. The realism of the proposal;
- e. Past performance of the offeror in complying with requirements of the clauses at FAR 52.219-8, Utilization of Small Business Concerns, and, for all large business offerors, FAR 52.219-9, Small Business Subcontracting Plan;
- f. The extent of participation of such firms in terms of the value of the total acquisition;
- g. The extent to which the offeror provides detailed explanations/documentation supporting the proposed participation percentages, or lack thereof. The Department of Defense (DOD) has established small business goals as an assistance to assure small business receives a fair proportion of DOD awards. The goals for this procurement are as follows: Small Business:  $\{X\%\}$  of the total contract value; Small Disadvantaged Business:  $\{Y\%\}$  of the total contract value; Woman-Owned Small Business:  $\{Z\%\}$  of the total contract value; Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) Small Business:  $\{A\%\}$  of the total contract value; Veteran Owned Small Business:  $\{B\%\}$  of the total contract value; Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business:  $\{C\%\}$  of the total contract value. (**Note**, for example, that a participation plan that reflects  $\{Z\%\}$  of the contract value for Woman-Owned Small Business would also count towards the overall Small Business Goal).

## D. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

### 1. INTRODUCTION.

a. The offeror's proposal shall be submitted electronically via the Army Single Face to Industry (ASFI) Interactive Business Opportunities Page (IBOP) in the files set forth below. The offeror's proposal shall consist of five volumes. The Volumes are I -Technical, II – Performance Risk, III – Cost, IV - Small Business Participation Plan, and V - Solicitation, Offer and Award Documents and Certifications/Representations. Files shall not contain classified data. The use of hyperlinks in proposals is prohibited. The URL for the IBOP is <http://abop.monmouth.army.mil>. Directions for navigating this Internet site are contained in a User Guide located at the Help Support link on the Navigator button or contact the IBOP help desk for assistance at 732-532-1840 or 732-532-5246. Offerors will need to be registered users in the IBOP in order to submit proposals. **WARNING: Please do not wait until the last minute to submit your proposals! To avoid submission of late proposals, we recommend the transmission of your proposal file 24 hours prior to the required proposal due date and time.** Offerors are encouraged to practice submitting proposals in the DEMO section of the IBOP in order to gauge the length of transmission via the Internet.

### 2. PROPOSAL FILES.

a. Format. The submission shall be clearly indexed and logically assembled. Each volume shall be clearly identified and shall begin at the top of a page. All pages of each volume shall be appropriately numbered and identified by the complete company name, date and solicitation number in the header and/or footer. A Table of Contents should be created using the Table of Contents feature in MS Word. MS Word (.doc) files shall use the following page setup parameters:

Margins – Top, Bottom, Left, Right - 1”  
Gutter – 0”  
From Edge – Header, Footer - 0.5”  
Page Size, Width – 8.5”  
Page Size, Height – 11”

The following additional restrictions apply:

Each paragraph shall be separated by at least one blank line. A standard, 12-point minimum font size applies. Arial or New Times Roman fonts are required. Tables and illustrations may use a reduced font size not less than 8-point and may be landscape.

b. File Packaging. All of the proposal files shall be compressed (zipped) into one file entitled proposal.zip using WinZip version 6.2 or later, or as separate uploads in their native format, i.e. doc, xls, ppt, etc. **\*\*Please note - Self extracting .exe files are no longer accepted.\*\***

**{If page limitations are being utilized, then a Table setting forth the page limits for the Technical volume should be stated and language similar to the following included:**

***Page Count: Those pages that exceed the page counts in Table X for each volume or attachment will not be evaluated. If there are more than forty-five lines of text on any page, the sum of the additional lines will be removed from back to front of the particular volume or attachment and will not be evaluated.***

c. Content Requirements. All information shall be confined to the appropriate file. The offeror shall confine submissions to essential matters, sufficient to define the proposal and provide adequate basis for evaluation. Offerors are responsible for including sufficient details, in a concise manner, to permit a complete and accurate evaluation of each proposal. Each file of the proposal shall consist of a Table of Contents, Summary Section, and the Narrative discussion. The Summary Section shall contain a brief abstract of the file. Proprietary information shall be clearly marked. The following shall be included in the Narrative discussion:

(i) VOLUME I – TECHNICAL.

***{Request technical information required to be provided by the offerors for evaluation}***

(ii) VOLUME II – PERFORMANCE RISK. Offerors shall submit a list of all Government contracts (prime and major subcontracts ***{in performance or awarded}***) during the past ***{X}*** years, which are relevant to the efforts required by this solicitation. Relevant efforts are defined as ***{define types of relevant past efforts; for example, those advanced or engineering development contracts for integration efforts involving equipment of a similar nature to the effort required by this solicitation}***. Data concerning the prime offeror shall be provided first, followed by each proposed major subcontractor, in alphabetical order. This volume shall be organized into the following sections:

(1) Section 1 – Contract Descriptions. This section shall include the following information in the following format:

(a) Contractor/Subcontractor place of performance, CAGE Code and DUNS Number. If the work was performed as a subcontractor, also provide the name of the prime contractor and Point of Contact (POC) within the prime contractor organization (name, and current address, e-mail address, and telephone and fax numbers).

(b) Government contracting activity, and current address, Procuring Contracting Officer's name, e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers.

(c) Government's technical representative/COR, and current e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers.



(d) Government contract administration activity and the Administrative Contracting Officer's name, and current e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers.

(e) Government contract administration activity's Pre-Award Monitor's name, and current e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers.

(f) Contract Number and, in the case of Indefinite Delivery type contracts, GSA contracts, and Blanket Purchase Agreements, include Delivery Order Numbers also.

(g) Contract Type (specific type such as Fixed Price (FP), Cost Reimbursement (CR), Time & Materials (T&M), etc.) In the case of Indefinite Delivery contracts, indicate specific type (Requirements, Definite Quantity, and Indefinite Quantity) and secondary contract type (FP, CR, T&M, etc)).

(h) Awarded price/cost.

(i) Final or projected final price/cost.

(j) Original delivery schedule, including dates of start and completion of work.

(k) Final, or projected final, delivery schedule, including dates of start and completion of work.

(2) Section 2 - Performance. Offerors shall provide a specific narrative explanation of each contract listed in Section 1 describing the objectives achieved and detailing how the effort is relevant to the requirements of this solicitation.

(a) For any contracts that did not/do not meet original schedule or technical performance requirements, provide a brief explanation of the reason(s) for the shortcomings and any corrective action(s) taken to avoid recurrence. The offerors shall list each time the delivery schedule was revised and provide an explanation of why the revision was necessary. All Requests for Deviation and Requests for Waiver shall be addressed with respect to causes and corrective actions. The offerors shall also provide a copy of any Cure Notices or Show Cause Letters received on each contract listed and a description of any corrective action implemented by the offeror or proposed subcontractor. The offerors shall indicate if any of the contracts listed were terminated and the type and reasons for the termination.

(b) For all contracts, the offeror shall provide data on all manufacturing warranty returns. Data shall delineate total number of warranty returns, number of Could Not Duplicate (CND), number of failures attributable to GFE component failures, and number and nature of failures attributable to the offeror's delivered product.

(3) Section 3 – Subcontracts. Offerors shall provide an outline of how the effort required by the solicitation will be assigned for performance within the offeror's corporate entity and among the proposed subcontractors. The information provided for the prime offeror and each

proposed major subcontractor must include the entire company name, company address, CAGE Code, DUNS Number and type of work to be performed by citing the applicable Government SOW subparagraph number. This includes all subcontractors who will be providing critical hardware/services or whose subcontract is for more than **XX%** of the total proposed price.

(4) Section 4 – New Corporate Entities. New corporate entities may submit data on prior contracts involving its officers and employees. However, in addition to the other requirements in this section, the offeror shall discuss in detail the role performed by such persons in the prior contracts cited. Information should be included in the files described in the sections above.

(5) Performance Risk Assessment Questionnaire. For all contracts identified in Section 1, Performance Risk Assessment Questionnaires must be completed and submitted. The offeror shall complete Part I of the Performance Risk Assessment Questionnaire and e-mail the questionnaire to both the Government contracting activity and technical representative responsible for the past/current contract. The POC's shall be instructed to electronically complete Part II of the questionnaire and e-mail the entire questionnaire to the Contracting Officer within {x} calendar days of the release of the RFP, to {contracting.officer}@us.army.mil. The offeror shall also e-mail to the Contracting Officer a list of all the POC's who were sent a questionnaire. The Government must receive this list within {x} calendar days after release of the RFP. The POC List shall be submitted in Word for Windows Table Format to include the following fields: Solicitation Number; Company Name; Contract Number; Government Agency; POC Last Name, First Name; POC Title; POC Telephone Number; POC E-Mail Address; Date E-Mailed to POC (month/day).

(iii) VOLUME III– COST (for cost type contracts).

1. Breakdown of cost data is required under this solicitation as set forth below. Offerors shall submit a fully completed SF Form 1411, Contract Pricing Proposal Cover Sheet. In addition, the offeror shall provide a cross-reference between the Statement of Work, WBS and CLINs/SLINs. Certified Cost and Pricing Data will not be required if adequate competition exists. If the Government determines adequate competition was not obtained, the Government reserves the right to request certified cost and pricing data.
2. The cost file of the proposal (Excel spreadsheet) and all cost or pricing data shall be submitted using the WBS contained in Attachment 2 of the solicitation, updated to reflect the proposed effort. There is NO requirement to submit a printed copy of the Cost file of the proposal.
3. Offerors are encouraged to add necessary lower-level WBS elements to the WBS presented in the SOW. These lower-level WBS elements should follow a hardware end-item structure to the lowest level possible before breaking into functional or process-based estimates.
4. Basis of estimate write-ups in the cost file shall follow this structure.
  - a. Describe the base data used to estimate the labor hours, cost of a service, or hardware cost.

- b. Describe why the offeror chose to use this base data for the proposal.
- c. Describe the adjustments, if any, to the base data and why the adjustments were appropriate.

The basis of estimate write-ups will be contained in the methodology description section for each line of the cost proposal.

**OR**

(iii) VOLUME III – PRICE (for fixed priced type contracts). The offeror shall complete Section B of the solicitation

(iv) VOLUME IV – SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION PLAN.

(1) All offerors, both small and large businesses, are required to submit Small Business Participation Plan information in accordance with DFARS 215.304 that shall include the following:

(a) Type of Business of Prime Contractor: Check all applicable boxes

- ☐ Large
- ☐ Small (also check type of Small Business below)
  - ☐ Small Non-Disadvantaged Business
  - ☐ Small Disadvantaged Business
  - ☐ Woman-Owned Small Business
  - ☐ HUB Zone Small Business
  - ☐ Veteran Owned Small Business
  - ☐ Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business

(b) Total Contract Value: (Include options, etc) \$\_\_\_\_\_

(c) Dollar Value of your participation as a Prime Contractor: \$\_\_\_\_\_

(d) Dollar Value and Percentage of Total Contract Value of Subcontracts Planned

For:

	Dollar Value	Percentage of Total Contract Value
Large	\$_____	%_____
Total Small	\$_____	%_____
Small Non-Disadvantaged	\$_____	%_____
Small Disadvantaged	\$_____	%_____

Woman-Owned Small	\$ _____	% _____
HUB Zone Small	\$ _____	% _____
Veteran Owned Small	\$ _____	% _____
Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small	\$ _____	% _____

Each participation percentage above shall be accompanied by detailed supporting documentation regarding the individual commitments. Detailed explanations shall also be provided when the percentages fall short of the DOD goals.

**NOTE:** The sum of the dollar values and percentages of Small Non-Disadvantaged and Small Disadvantaged should equal the entries for Total Small. However, the sum of all the percentages under Paragraph (d) need not equal 100% since the prime is not included and individual subcontractors may be counted towards more than one category. All percentages should use TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE as a baseline.

(e) List principal supplies/services (be specific) to be subcontracted to:

	Name of Company	Type of Service/Supply
Large:		
Small:		
Small Non-Disadvantaged:		
Small Disadvantaged:		
Woman-Owned Small:		
HUB Zone Small:		
Veteran Owned Small Business:		
Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small:		

**NOTE:** For purpose of subcontracting, Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority Institutions (HBCUs/MIs) are considered as disadvantaged and should be broken out separately.

(f) Prior Performance Information: Provide any information substantiating the offeror's track record of utilizing small business on past contracts. For Large Business: include ACO rating and SF 295 Information. For Large and Small businesses: provide descriptive

information for all small business categories. Any information concerning long-term relationships with Small Business subcontractors, such as mentor-protégé relationships, should be provided.

***(g) Extent of Commitment: Provide documentation regarding enforceable commitments to utilize any Small Business category, as defined in FAR Part 19, as subcontractors.***

***(2) Each Large Business offeror shall provide a Small Business Subcontracting Plan that contains all the elements required by FAR 52.219-9. This plan shall be submitted separately from the Small Business Participation Plan information required above, which applies to both large and small businesses. The Small Business Subcontracting Plan is not a requirement for evaluation in source selection, but rather a requirement for award to a large business and will be incorporated into any resultant contract.***

**(v) VOLUME V - SOLICITATION, OFFER AND AWARD DOCUMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS.**

Certifications and Representations - Each offeror shall complete (fill-in and signatures) the solicitation sections indicated below using the file (without modification to the file) provided with the solicitation. An authorized official of the firm shall sign the SF 33 and all certifications requiring original signature. An Acrobat PDF file shall be created to capture the signatures for submission.

Section A – Standard Form 33 (SF 33), Solicitation, Offer and Award

Section G – Contract Administration Data

Section K – Representations, Certifications and Other Statements of Offerors

**E. ORAL DISCUSSIONS *{IF APPROPRIATE}***

1. GENERAL INFORMATION. In accordance with FAR 15.306(d), oral discussion sessions with each offeror may be held. After completion of oral discussions with each offeror in the competitive range and in accordance with FAR 15.307(b), all offerors in the competitive range will be allowed a minimum of *{X}* calendar days to submit Final Proposal Revisions.

2. ORAL DISCUSSIONS SCHEDULING. If oral discussions are conducted, the Contracting Officer will schedule the oral discussion sessions, and each offeror will be notified of the time and place at least three (3) business days prior to their oral discussion session. Appropriate security clearances should be provided in sufficient time to process the requests. The Contracting Officer will provide additional instructions with the notification. The oral discussion sessions will take place at the Government's facility at *{location}*.

## SECTION III

### EVALUATION ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**A. EVALUATION ORGANIZATION.** The evaluation and selection of the successful offeror will be performed by the following organizational elements:

1. Source Selection Authority (SSA)
2. Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC)
3. Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB)
4. Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO)

\* The composition of the SSEB is shown in Appendix A and is discussed below.

### **B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS.**

1. Source Selection Authority. The SSA is responsible for the proper conduct of the source selection process and for making the final source selection decision. The SSA shall:

- a. Ensure the proper conduct of the source selection process and make the final source selection decision.
- b. Ensure that the Source Selection Plan (SSP) and evaluation criteria are consistent with the requirements of the solicitation and applicable regulations.
- c. Concur with the contracting officer's decision to release the solicitation.
- d. Establish the SSO and approve the source selection/evaluation plan.
- e. Ensure that personnel with the requisite skills, expertise, and experience to execute the SSP are appointed to the SSEB and SSAC.
- f. Approve the contracting officer's competitive range determination.
- g. Ensure that conflicts of interest, or the appearance thereof, are avoided.
- h. Ensure that premature or unauthorized disclosure of source selection information is avoided.

- i. Ensure that the source selection process is conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- j. Select the successful offeror and ensure that supporting rationale is documented in Source Selection Decision Document before contract award.

2. Source Selection Advisory Council. The SSAC shall, at a minimum:

- a. Review and approve the evaluation criteria prior to their approval by the SSA.
- b. Approve membership of the SSEB.
- c. Ensure that appropriate actions are taken consistent with the FAR to obtain competition in the selection process.
- d. Review the solicitation and recommend that the SSA authorize release.
- e. Monitor the SSEB and provide guidance as necessary.
- f. Provide briefings to the SSA, as required, on the progress of the evaluation process.
- g. As required, meet with and discuss evaluation findings with appropriate members.
- h. After the initial, and any subsequent evaluation by the SSEB, validate the strengths, weaknesses and deficiencies prior to or concurrent with the SSA approving a competitive range determination.
- i. In conjunction with the SSA, meet, at a minimum, to determine that meaningful discussions are concluded prior to the Request for Final Proposal Revisions.
- j. Identify discriminating factors amongst offerors to aid the SSA in the selection process.
- k. Review the source selection decision document for the SSA's signature, if requested by the SSA.

3. Source Selection Evaluation Board. The SSEB will:

- a. Conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of proposals against the solicitation requirements and the approved evaluation criteria.

- b. Prepare and submit the SSEB evaluation reports to the SSAC/SSA.
- c. Brief the SSAC/SSA, as requested.
- d. Respond to special instructions from the SSAC/SSA.
- e. Prepare the necessary items for negotiation.
- f. Provide information for debriefings of unsuccessful offerors.

4. Procuring Contracting Officer. The PCO will:

- a. Act as the Acquisition Center advisor to the SSEB.
- b. Act as a point of contact between the Government and the offerors. Conduct such negotiations as necessary.
- c. Determine, with the SSA's approval, which offerors are within the competitive range.
- d. Award the contract.
- e. Chair all required debriefings.

**C. COMPOSITION OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS.**

- 3. The SSAC will consist of senior Government personnel.
- 4. The SSEB will consist of a Chairperson, and as necessary, a Deputy Chairperson, Factor Chairpersons, Subfactor Chairpersons, and teams of evaluators.
  - a. SSEB Chairperson - The SSEB Chairperson is required to review all aspects of all proposals, and shall fully participate in all ratings and prepare the written position of the SSEB. The SSEB Chairperson is responsible for the conduct of a comprehensive evaluation of competitive proposals in an impartial and equitable manner, and the production of summary facts and findings required in the conduct of the source selection process. The SSEB Chairperson is also responsible for the following:
    - (i) Assure that the SSEB members understand the criteria for the evaluation of proposals so that there is a uniformity of approach in the rating effort.
    - (ii) Be responsive to the guidance and special instructions of the SSA.
    - (iii) Provide such briefings and consultations as may be required by the SSA.



- (iv) Assure the adequacy and overall quality of the narrative justification for the evaluation results.
- (v) Recruit competent individuals for assignment to the board.
- (vi) Select and assign the Factor Chairpersons.
- (vii) Require the assigned members' attendance at the meetings and conferences of the board and assign work necessary for the accomplishment of its mission.
- (viii) Relieve members from assignment in the event of a demonstrated emergency or other cause.
- (ix) Require members to work overtime, when necessary.
- (x) Assure the safeguarding of sensitive information used by the board.
- (xi) Arrange for the needed secretarial staff at the work site.
- (xii) Plan the security requirements of the board and the work site and ensure their accomplishment when the board is convened.
- (xiii) Establish the agenda and the schedule for SSEB meetings.
- (xiv) Isolate policy issues and major questions requiring decision by the SSA.
- (xv) Supervise the preparation of needed documentation to support evaluation findings.
- (xvi) Transmit appropriate SSEB records to the Contracting Officer.

b. SSEB Evaluators. The SSEB evaluators will consist of Factor Chairpersons supported by a team of evaluators. Each SSEB Factor Chairperson is responsible for management and administration of the evaluation and its timely completion. The teams of evaluators will support the Factor Chairpersons in the completion of the evaluation. These evaluators will be assigned to factor committees and will further be divided into subcommittees to evaluate the different sub-factors of each factor. Individuals may be assigned to serve on more than one committee based on their expertise and the need to assure that all sections are fully evaluated. Each committee will evaluate one or more sub-factors and provide summary reports for the Factor Chairperson. Each Factor Chairperson is responsible to the SSEB Chairperson for the proper evaluation of each proposal in his/her assigned factor. Each Factor Chairperson will provide recommended factor and sub-factor ratings (supported by narrative analysis) to the SSEB Chairperson.

## SECTION IV

### EVALUATION PROCEDURES

**A. AGENDA.** The source selection process will follow the sequence outlined below:

1. Issue Solicitation
2. Receive Proposals
3. Conduct Initial Evaluation
4. Present Findings to SSA/SSAC
5. Establish Competitive Range
6. Conduct Discussions
7. Conduct Interim Evaluation
8. Present Findings to SSA/SSAC
9. Revise/Reaffirm Competitive Range
10. Request and Receive Final Proposal Revisions
11. Conduct Final Evaluation
12. Present Findings to SSA/SSAC
13. SSA Decision

### **B. DEFINITIONS**

1. Rating. The rating for the Technical factor and sub-factors and the Small Business Participation Plan factor will be expressed as an adjectival assessment of Outstanding, Good, Acceptable, Susceptible to Being Made Acceptable or Unacceptable.

2. Technical Sub-Factor Rating Definitions. The following rating definitions will be utilized in the evaluation of the Technical sub-factors (the Technical factor will be a “roll-up” of the Technical sub-factor ratings):

*SEE CHAPTER 5 OF THE SOURCE SELECTION MANUAL FOR ADJECTIVAL RATINGS AND DEFINITIONS*

3. Small Business Participation Plan (SBPP) Factor Rating Definitions. The following rating definitions will be utilized in the evaluation of the SBPP factor:

*SEE CHAPTER 5 OF THE SOURCE SELECTION MANUAL FOR ADJECTIVAL RATINGS AND DEFINITIONS*

4. Performance Risk Factor Rating Definitions. A rating of High Risk, Moderate Risk, Low Risk or Unknown Risk (as defined below) will be assigned to the Performance Risk Factor:

*SEE CHAPTER 5 OF THE SOURCE SELECTION MANUAL FOR ADJECTIVAL RATINGS AND DEFINITIONS*

5. Deficiency. A material failure of a proposal to meet a Government requirement or a combination of significant weaknesses in a proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance to an unacceptable level.

6. Strength. Any aspect of a proposal when judged against a stated evaluation criterion, enhances the merit of the proposal or increases the probability of successful performance of the contract.

7. Significant Strength. A significant strength appreciably enhances the merit of a proposal or appreciably increases the probability of successful contract performance.

8. Weakness. A flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

9. Significant Weakness. A flaw that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

### **C. RATING METHOD**

1. Rating Package. Each individual evaluating a factor or sub-factor of the offeror's proposal will receive a rating package containing the following:

- a. Evaluation Policies and Procedures (Sections IV and V of this Plan)
- b. Basis for Award, Evaluation Factors and Evaluation Approach (Section M of the RFP and Section II of this Plan)
- c. Proposal Instructions (Section L of the RFP and Section II of this Plan)
- d. Summary Evaluation Form (Appendix C)
- e. Item for Negotiation Form and Item for Negotiation Evaluation Form (Appendix D and E)
- f. Request for Proposals (RFP)

2. Rating Structure. The non-cost factors will be evaluated and rated based upon the general and specific instructions supplied in Section IV of this Plan. The Cost factor will not have an adjectival rating assigned. The rating definitions above will be used for initial and interim evaluations. The ratings, with the exception of Susceptible to Being Made Acceptable, will be used for the final evaluation.

### **D. PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

1. All proposals will be received by the Contracting Officer not later than the hour and date given in the RFP. The SSEB will control all copies of the offerors' proposals and other associated data.

2. Upon receipt of proposals, evaluators will read their applicable section to gain an understanding of the level of the information and determine if errors, omissions or deficiencies exist. Major problems will be reported to the respective Factor Chairperson and the SSEB Chairperson. The SSEB Chairperson will notify the Contracting Officer of any major problems.

3. The SSEB will assign the appropriate rating to each factor and sub-factor as set forth above. Each SSEB Factor Chairperson will prepare an overall narrative summary for his/her respective factor and sub-factors along with recommended factor and sub-factor ratings and forward them to the SSEB Chairperson.

4. The SSEB Chairperson will review the narrative summary and recommended factor and sub-factor ratings and provide an overall summary report (Initial Evaluation Report). This report will be forwarded to the SSA/SSAC and shall contain the adjectival assessments for each factor and sub-factor (excluding Cost) and the supporting rationale.

5. Any proposal(s) which the Contracting Officer determines, with SSA approval, to not be among the most highly rated proposals will be considered outside the competitive range and will be eliminated from further consideration, and the offeror(s) will be so informed.

6. The Contracting Officer may conduct discussions with each offeror retained in the competitive range. After the conclusion of discussions, any new information received from the offerors will be evaluated. This evaluation will be documented in a supplement to the Initial Evaluation Report (Interim Evaluation Report) and will consist of an update, which addresses each factor and sub-factor of the Initial Evaluation Report.

7. Using the Interim Evaluation Report, the Contracting Officer will amend the competitive range with SSA approval. The Contracting Officer will give all offerors within the revised competitive range an opportunity to submit final proposal revisions by a common cutoff date. Any final proposal revisions received will be evaluated and the re-evaluation will be documented in another supplemental report (Final Evaluation Report), which addresses each factor and sub-factor of the Initial and Interim Evaluation Reports. The Final Evaluation Report will not contain a recommendation pertaining to which offeror should be selected for award.

**E. SOURCE SELECTION.** The SSA will make the final determination of the offeror selected for award. The SSA in making a selection is not bound by the findings of the SSEB/SSAC. The SSA is only limited in that his/her selection must have a rational basis in terms of the evaluation factors/sub-factors in the solicitation and must meet all legal and procedural requirements of the evaluation process. The final decision, which will be an integrated assessment based on the entire evaluation process, will be executed by the SSA. The Contracting Officer, after appropriate legal review, will then make the award and debrief the unsuccessful offerors(s), if requested.

**F. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SELECTION.** The Contracting Officer will make the announcement of the selection of a successful contractor directly or through his/her designee.

**G. DEBRIEFING OF UNSUCCESSFUL OFFERORS.** Debriefing will be conducted by the Contracting Officer, in concert with the SSEB Chairperson, in a manner that will be prescribed by the Contracting Officer.

## SECTION V

### POLICIES, INSTRUCTIONS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

**A. GENERAL.** The impartial, equitable, and comprehensive evaluation of offerors' proposals is dependent on the capability of the Government to provide each offeror the same information and to evaluate each proposal independently.

**B. SAFEGUARDING PROCUREMENT INFORMATION.** The sensitivity of the proceedings and documentation require stringent and special safeguards throughout the evaluation process.

1. Inadvertent release of information could be a source of considerable misunderstanding and embarrassment to the Government. It is incumbent, therefore, upon all members of the team not to make any unauthorized disclosures of information pertaining to this evaluation. All evaluation participants will observe the following rules:

a. Do not permit members of your organization to divulge your membership to casual callers.

b. Refer all attempted communications by offerors' representatives to the Contracting Officer.

c. Do not accept any invitation from personnel of an offeror for participation in any functions, regardless of how remote they may be from the evaluation process.

d. Do not assume that a non-participating contractor can be told anything pertaining to the evaluation and source selection.

e. Do not assume that it is safe to speak about the evaluation because you are among Government employees or in Government buildings.

f. Do not discuss any aspect of the evaluation with other board members outside the area designated for deliberations.

g. Do not discuss the substantive issues of the evaluation with any unauthorized individual even after the announcement of the winning offeror.

2. Care must be exercised to ensure that copies of the evaluation records and information relating thereto are adequately marked and safeguarded throughout the entire proceedings.

3. Removal of proposals or evaluation documents from the evaluation work site is not authorized except as specifically approved by the SSEB Chairperson.

4. To the degree feasible, all proposals and working papers will be kept in a locked container except when being used in conjunction with evaluation and source selection.

5. All participating personnel will sign the Agreement set forth at Appendix B to the effect that they are familiar with the regulations and other guidance pertaining to security measures.

### **C. EVALUATION POLICIES**

1. The principal purpose of the evaluation procedure is to provide a sound basis for the SSA to make an informed judgment. The evaluation methodology and techniques employed should enhance the quality, credibility and confidence levels in the adequacy of the evaluation results. The evaluation process, therefore, must be consistent, well-thought out, adequately staffed, managed, and carried out in a professional, comprehensive and objective manner. It must frame the elements for the selection decision with sufficient clarity and visibility so that the SSA will be able to make a sound decision within a short time period.

2. Proposal evaluation requires a mixture of fact-finding and reporting and the application of professional judgment to provide a comprehensive picture of the adequacy of each proposal. This requires:

a. Examination and judgment of the merits of each proposal as compared to the criteria established for evaluation.

b. Validation of the information, estimates and projections of each offeror as presented in their proposal.

c. Successive summarization of the detailed evaluation results accompanied by analysis in sufficient depth to give visibility to any significant findings or reservations.

**APPENDIX A**

**MEMBERS OF AND ADVISORS TO THE SOURCE SELECTION ADVISORY  
COUNCIL (SSAC)**

**MEMBERS OF AND ADVISORS TO THE SOURCE SELECTION EVALUATION  
BOARD (SSEB)**



## APPENDIX B

### SOURCE SELECTION PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

*. Important! This Agreement concerns a matter within the jurisdiction of a United States Government agency. Individuals who make false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements and/or certifications may be subject to prosecution under 18 U.S.C, §1001.*

#### AGREEMENT

1. This Agreement applies to individuals involved in Solicitation {*Number*}, also known as the {*Program Name*}.
2. This Agreement contains the rules of conduct relating to this acquisition. It includes rules of conduct regarding conflicts of interest as well as rules of conduct regarding the safeguarding of confidential information.
3. Your signature on this Agreement indicates that you have read this Agreement and agree to be bound by its terms.

#### TERMS

4. I have read, understand and will abide by the requirements of Section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 USC 423) as implemented in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) §3.104. The Contracting Officer has made a copy of FAR §3.104 available to me.
  5. \* To the best of my knowledge, neither I, my spouse, my dependent child(ren), nor members of my household:
    - a. Have any direct or indirect financial interest:
      - (1) In any firm on the list of potential offerors or which has otherwise expressed an interest in the acquisition (if this certification is made prior to receipt/opening of proposals).
      - (2) In any of the firms submitting proposals in response to this Solicitation or their proposed team members/subcontractors (if this certification is made subsequent to receipt/opening of proposals).
    - b. Have any other beneficial interest in such firms except:
-

6. \* To the best of my knowledge, no person related to me by blood or marriage or any business associate is employed by or has a direct or indirect financial interest or any other beneficial interest in the firms referenced in paragraph 5.a, above, except:

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\* The listing of interests or activities under paragraphs 5 and 6 above does not mean that the employee cannot participate in the acquisition/source selection process. The effect of the interests/activities will be determined by the Chairperson of the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB), as set out in the Source Selection Evaluation Plan (or the Contracting Officer for acquisitions at his/her level), after consultation with legal counsel.

7. I understand that Public Law 100-679 and provisions of the FAR govern the release of contractor bid or proposal information and source selection information. I will not knowingly disclose any contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information regarding this acquisition directly or indirectly to any person other than a person authorized by the head of the agency or the Contracting Officer to receive such information.

8. I will observe the following rules during the conduct of the acquisition:

a. I will not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any promise of future employment or business opportunity from, or engage, directly or indirectly, in any discussion of future employment or business opportunity with, any officer, employee, representative, agent, or consultant of a competing contractor.

b. I will not ask for, demand, exact, solicit, seek, accept, receive, or agree to receive, directly or indirectly, any money, gratuity, or other thing of value from any officer, employee, representative, agent, or consultant of any competing contractor for this acquisition. I will advise my family that the acceptance of a gratuity from those who are engaged in or seek to do business with the Department of Defense may be imputed to me and must therefore be avoided.

c. I will instruct members of my parent or home organization not to divulge my participation in the evaluation and source selection process or my physical location while participating in the evaluation and source selection process to unauthorized persons.

d. I understand that all communications with offerors or their team members/subcontractors concerning this acquisition must be made by/through the Contracting Officer or his or her designee. I will divert all attempted communications by offerors' representatives or any other unauthorized person to the Contracting Officer, and advise the Chairperson of the SSEB and legal counsel.

e. I will not discuss evaluation or source selection matters, including proprietary proposal information, with any unauthorized individuals (including Government personnel), even after the announcement of the successful contractor, unless authorized by proper authority. All discussions of evaluation/source selection matters with other SSEB members shall be conducted solely in those areas designated for deliberations.

9. I realize that my actions in connection with my participation in this source selection are subject to intense scrutiny and I will conduct myself in a way that will not adversely affect the confidence of the public in the source selection process. I will avoid any action, whether or not prohibited, that could result in or create the appearance of my losing independence or impartiality. I will not use my public office for private gain, and I agree not to engage in any personal business or professional activity, or enter into any financial transaction, that involves or appears to involve the direct or indirect use of “inside information” to further a private gain for myself or others.

10. I understand that my obligations under this certification are of a continuing nature, and if anything takes place which would cause a change to any statement, or create a violation of any representation or rule of conduct herein, I will immediately bring such matter to the attention of the Chairperson of the SSEB, or the Contracting Officer.

### **CERTIFICATION**

11. I agree to the Terms of this Agreement and certify that I have read and understand the above Agreement. I further certify that the statements made herein are true and correct.

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**Signature**

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**Name (Printed)**

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**Organization**

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**Date**

APPENDIX C

(Two Sample Summary Evaluation Forms are Provided)

**SAMPLE SUMMARY EVALUATION FORM (1)**  
(FORMS AT APPENDIX D & E SUPPORT THIS FORM)

SUMMARY EVALUATION FORM		
RFP No:		
EVALUATOR'S NAME:	OFFEROR:	
RFP REFERENCES:	PROPOSAL REFERENCES:	
FACTOR:	VOLUME/PARAGRAPH:	
SUBFACTOR:	PAGE NUMBER:	
<b>Evaluation Rating:</b> <i>(Insert appropriate rating from applicable adjectival rating; e.g., Outstanding (O) Good (G) Acceptable (A) Marginal (M) Susceptible to Being Made Acceptable (S), Unacceptable (U))</i>		
<b>Evaluator's Rating: (Merit/Risk)</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <b>Initial Rating: (e.g., G/M)</b>  <b>Discussions:</b>  <b>Final Rating:</b> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <b>Evaluator Initials/ Date:</b>  <b>Evaluator Initials/ Date:</b>  <b>Evaluator Initials/ Date:</b> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <b>Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:</b>  <b>Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:</b>  <b>Factor Chairperson Initials/Date:</b> </div> </div>		
<b>RATIONALE:</b> <i>Include supporting rationale for the ratings. Using the evaluation rating definitions, state the evaluation results in terms of strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and uncertainties. Also include any items for negotiations. Identify all comments and questions below with the rating (e.g., Initial Rating (IR), Result of Discussion (RD), or Final Rating (FR). Use continuation sheets or a database as needed and a separate sheet for every factor or subfactor.</i>		
<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <i>(Precede the strength with an (S) if it identifies a significant strength. Address any risks associated with the strength.)</i>		
<b>WEAKNESSES(identify IFN number(s) for each one):</b> <i>(Precede the weakness with an (S) if it identifies a significant weakness. Address the risks associated with the weakness.)</i>		
<b>DEFICIENCIES(identify IFN number(s) for each one):</b>		
<b>ITEMS FOR NEGOTIATION (IFNs) required for each weakness, significant weakness, deficiency and uncertainty</b>		

APPENDIX C (continued)

**SAMPLE SUMMARY EVALUATION FORM (2)**  
(FORMS AT APPENDIX D & E SUPPORT THIS FORM)

OFFEROR \_\_\_\_\_

FACTOR \_\_\_\_\_

SUBFACTOR \_\_\_\_\_

INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_ INTERIM \_\_\_\_\_ FINAL \_\_\_\_\_

1. REFERENCE LOCATION IN RFP AND OFFEROR'S PROPOSAL:

a. RFP:

b. PROPOSAL:

2. SUMMARY:

3. STRENGTHS (INDICATE WHETHER SIGNIFICANT):

4. WEAKNESSES (INDICATE WHETHER SIGNIFICANT):

5. DEFICIENCIES:

6. IFNs OUTSTANDING:

7. UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM:

8. FEASIBILITY OF APPROACH:

9. FLEXIBILITY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
EVALUATOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
FACTOR CHAIRPERSON

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

APPENDIX D

ITEM FOR NEGOTIATION (IFN) FORM  
(TO BE PROVIDED TO THE OFFEROR DURING DISCUSSIONS)

OFFEROR: \_\_\_\_\_

IFN NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. RFP AND PROPOSAL REFERENCES

a. RFP:

b. PROPOSAL:

2. REASON FOR SUBMISSION:

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| ___ DEFICIENCY           | (a material failure of a proposal to meet the Government's requirements or a combination of significant weaknesses in a proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance to an unacceptable level.) |
| ___ SIGNIFICANT WEAKNESS | (a flaw in the proposal that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance)  |
| ___ WEAKNESS             | (a flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance)  |

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

4. OFFEROR'S RESPONSE:

**APPENDIX E**

**ITEM FOR NEGOTIATION (IFN) EVALUATION FORM**

1. OFFEROR:
2. IFN NUMBER:
3. PROPOSAL REFERENCE:
4. EVALUATION OF RESPONSE:

\_\_\_\_\_  
EVALUATOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

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***Sample of a Sample Task Used In Source Selection***

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**Operations Division Sample Task – Local Area Network**

**1.0 Objective.** To provide automation/networking support to the XXX Directorate Sensitive Unclassified (SU) Infrastructure Network.

**1.1 Assumptions.**

**a) Background.** XXXX requires contractor support to provide LAN/WAN services for up to 450 personnel at the SU level via an existing Local Area Network (LAN). The SU LAN operates on a 24/7 basis. The predominantly Cisco based SU network consists of a C4006 main backbone switch and C3550 edge switches running Cisco IOS and Cisco Works management software. The Gbit fiber backbone supports 100Mbit CAT-5 copper to the desktop. The network is connected through a Sidewinder firewall, with failover, to the XXXX metropolitan area network which routes traffic to the DISA NIPRnet. The backbone serves various XXXX-controlled buildings at XXXXX, with a T1 line providing connectivity to XXXX Activity. Remote access is provided via dial-in and VPN services. Eleven Microsoft-based servers and 450 clients run current Army approved systems and office automation applications, as do 100 laptop computers, some of which are dockable on the SU LAN. UNIX/LINUX based appliances provide some of the print and file services. The XXXX SU network is integrated into the Army Military Intelligence Active Directory Forest, which is part of the Army Enterprise Architecture.

**b) Security Clearances.** Contractor personnel must possess and maintain TS SI/TK security clearances at all times.

**c) Place of Performance.** Main technical work efforts shall be performed on-site at Anywhere, Any State. Remote and on-site support is also required at the XXXX Flight Activity at Anywhere, Any State on an as-needed basis. Some off-site travel for conferences, meetings and training may be required.

**d) Government Furnished Information/Government Furnished Equipment (GFI/GFE).** NoGFI/GFE requirements will exist for this sample task.

**e) Period of Performance.** Offerors shall assume that their approach will include a twelve month Period of Performance.

**2.0 Task Requirements.**

**2.1 Technical Automation Support.** The Contractor shall:

- a. Maintain XXXX SU network infrastructure in operational condition twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week (24/7), with the exception of scheduled downtime.



- b. Maintain dial-in and VPN remote services in operational condition on a 24/7 basis.
- c. Maintain network operations, including network, server and desktop/laptop systems administration, updating, troubleshooting and repair with the exception of scheduled downtime.
- d. Work in concert with the Anywhere DOIM/NETCOM to maintain external network connectivity to the Anywhere MAN and NIPRnet.
- e. Work in concert with the Army Intelligence Community (INSCOM) in operation/maintenance of the XXXX OU within the Army MI AD Forest.
- f. Plan downtime for necessary network maintenance in concert with the XXXX Technical Point of Contact (TPOC). Every effort shall be made to ensure outages occur during periods of “low user demand”.
- g. Maintain an inventory and track the location of all ADP hardware, spare parts, software and all related LAN/WAN equipment in support of periodic property book audits using a Government supplied database.
- h. Maintain, implement, support and track all hardware and software updates and patches, maintenance actions, system security and operations, system software and user data back-up files.
- i. Operate an on-site Helpdesk to serve as a single point of contact for all ADP, remote computing, hardware and software help calls and technical support for XXXX users. The Helpdesk shall be manned from 0800 to 1700 hours Monday through Friday; the Helpdesk phone shall be manned from 0700 through 1800 hours Monday through Friday. Emergency on-call support shall be provided by the contractor twenty four hours a day, seven days a week with a 60 minute callback time. The contractor shall track all service calls, including a brief description of the problem, in a database provided by the Government. Helpdesk call priority will be set by the TPOC.

**2.2 Network Security.** The contractor shall provide network security services including the following, in compliance with Army Regulation 25-2, Information Assurance:

- a. Maintenance and operation of firewalls.
- b. Addition of an intrusion detection system for monitoring of incoming and outgoing network traffic.
- c. Maintenance and operation of remote access authentication systems.
- d. Preparation of accreditation documentation in support of DoD DITSCAP and subsequent accreditation processes.
- e. Monitor and act on all Information Assurance (IA) advisories from Army and DoD sources. Maintain compliance with Army IA directives. Interface with and report to XXXX IA authorities as required. Maintain current IA information in the Army A&VTR database and any subsequent Army data capture devices.
- f. Perform detailed analyses of computer facilities site security requirements for TPOC review and implement requirements as directed.
- g. Collect and review all systems and network log information as required by AR 25-2.
- h. Maintain data backup including offsite storage of backup media as part of a comprehensive Continuity of Operations Plan.
- i. Follow all applicable STIGS and Best Business Practices as issued by Army and DoD.

**2.3 Web Support.** The contractor shall provide expertise in development, operation, maintenance, enhancement and content editing of XXXX internal Intranet services.

**2.4 Documentation.** The contractor shall prepare, modify and maintain all XXXX IT documentation in accordance with DoD and Army standards. Administrative documentation shall include Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all functions provided by the contractor, such as Helpdesk SOP, and Backup & Recovery SOP.

**3.0 Specific Direction for Sample Task Submittal: Local Area Network.**

- a. Using the Performance Work Statement and Labor Categories provided list the skill levels, amount of hours and labor rates for prime contractor and each sub contractor, materials and other direct costs required to perform each effort of this sample task.
- b. Describe the effort (how you would execute) that you would be required to perform to support the XXXX LAN in the manner described in Paragraph 2 and subparagraphs above.