



ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY
AND LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS
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COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION
COMMAND (ATTN: ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR
ACQUISITION, LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR
RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NETWORKS
AND INFORMATION INTEGRATION
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Source Selection Procedures

The Source Selection Joint Analysis Team (JAT) was established on November 10, 2008, by the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics). The objective of the JAT was to standardize the methodology and approach the Department uses to conduct competitively negotiated source selections. The JAT has concluded its examination of the current source selection processes utilized within the Department and identified the key elements of a successful source selection.

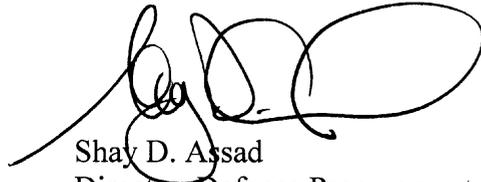
The attached document provides the procedures to be used within the Department when conducting negotiated, competitive acquisitions utilizing FAR Part 15 procedures. Highlights of the procedures include:

- required use of standardized rating criteria and descriptions for the “technical” and “past performance” factors and;
- a requirement that a Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC) be appointed on Source Selections valued at over \$100M. The SSAC will also be required to provide the Source Selection Authority (SSA) with a written comparative analysis of proposals and award recommendation for the SSA’s consideration.

Overall, the DoD Source Selection Procedures are designed to provide for uniform Source Selection guidance within the Department and simplify the Source Selection process.

These procedures are effective July 1, 2011, and are mandatory for all competitive acquisitions utilizing FAR Part 15 procedures. All request for proposals (RFPs) issued after July 1, 2011, are subject to these procedures.

My staff point of contact is Mr. Warren Arneson. He can be reached at 703-695-4258 or warren.arneson@osd.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shay D. Assad', written over the printed name.

Shay D. Assad
Director, Defense Procurement
and Acquisition Policy

Attachment:
As stated



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SOURCE SELECTION PROCEDURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Purpose, Roles, and Responsibilities

1.1	Purpose	1
1.2	Best-Value Continuum	1
1.3	Applicability	2
1.4	Source Selection Team Roles and Responsibilities	2
1.5	Program Management/Requirements Office Roles and Responsibilities	8

Chapter 2. Pre-Solicitation Activities

2.1	Conduct Acquisition Planning	9
2.2	Develop a Source Selection Plan	10
2.3	Develop the Request for Proposals	11
2.4	Release the Request for Proposals	13

Chapter 3. Evaluation and Decision Process

3.1	Evaluation Activities	14
3.2	Documentation of Initial Evaluation Results	20
3.3	Award without Discussions	20
3.4	Discussion Process	21
3.5	Final Proposal Revisions	21

3.6	Documentation of Final Evaluation Results	22
3.7	Conduct and Documentation of Comparative Analysis	22
3.8	Best-Value Decision	22
3.9	Source Selection Decision Document	23
3.10	Debriefings	23

Chapter 4. Documentation Requirements

	Documentation Requirements	24
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Chapter 5. Definitions

	Definitions	25
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Appendix A. Lowest Price Technically Acceptable Source Selection Process

Appendix B. Debriefing Guide

Chapter 1

Purpose, Roles, and Responsibilities

1.1 Purpose

This document provides the Department of Defense (DoD) procedures for conducting competitively negotiated source selections and outlines a common set of principles and procedures for conducting such acquisitions. The goal of this procedure is to ensure the Department's source selection process delivers quality, timely products and services to the Warfighter and the Nation at the best value for the taxpayer.

1.2 Best-Value Continuum

This document describes two of the acquisition processes and techniques that may be used to design competitive acquisition strategies suitable for the specific circumstances of the acquisition: Tradeoff Source Selection Process and Lowest Price Technically Acceptable Source Selection Process.

- Tradeoff Source Selection Process (see FAR 15.101-1). This process allows for a tradeoff between non-cost factors and cost/price and allows the Government to accept other than the lowest priced proposal or other than the highest technically rated proposal to achieve a best-value contract award. Further, it describes various rating approaches to evaluating proposals when using a tradeoff process. The application of this process, as well as general source selection principles, is discussed in the body of this document.
- Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA) Source Selection Process (see FAR 15.101-2). The LPTA process is appropriate when best value is expected to result from selection of a technically acceptable proposal with the lowest evaluated price. The application of LPTA is discussed in Appendix A. In addition, the general principles outlined in the body of this document also apply to LPTA (see preface to Appendix A for exemptions).

In the best-value continuum described in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.101, an agency can obtain best value in negotiated acquisitions by using any one or a combination of source selection approaches. However, regardless of the source selection approach taken, agencies are required to utilize the standardized rating tables as detailed in this procedure. For any factors/subfactors evaluated on other than an "acceptable/unacceptable" basis, the ratings at Section 3.1 shall be utilized. For any factors/subfactors evaluated on an "acceptable/unacceptable" basis, the ratings at Appendix A, Table A-1 and A-2 shall be utilized.

1.3 Applicability

This procedure is required for all best-value, negotiated, competitive acquisitions under FAR Part 15. Compliance with law, FAR Part 15, Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) 215 and the companion resource Procedures, Guidance and Information (PGI) is required. These procedures are not required for the following acquisitions:

- Competitions where the only evaluated factor is price
- Basic research and acquisitions where Broad Agency Announcements (BAA) are used in accordance with FAR Part 35 to solicit proposals and award contracts,
- Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR), Small Business Technology Transfer Research (STTR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBTT) acquisitions solicited and awarded in accordance with 15 United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 638.
- Architect-engineer services solicited and awarded in accordance with FAR Part 36,
- FAR Part 12 Streamlined Acquisitions,
- Acquisitions using simplified acquisition procedures in accordance with FAR Part 13 (including Part 12 acquisitions using Part 13 procedures),
- Orders under multiple award contracts – Fair Opportunity (FAR 16.505 (b)(1)), and
- Acquisitions using FAR subpart 8.4.

The procedures in this guide may be waived only with the express permission of the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy.

1.4 Source Selection Team Roles and Responsibilities

Source selection is accomplished by a team that is tailored to the unique acquisition. Composition of the team generally consists of the Source Selection Authority (SSA), Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO) (if different from the SSA), Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB), Advisors, Cost or Pricing Experts, Legal Counsel, Small Business Specialists, and other subject-matter experts. Team members may include personnel from other Governmental sources such as headquarters or joint service members. Key members of the Source Selection Team (SST)—such as the SSA, SSEB, chairperson and functional leads, and the PCO— should have source selection experience. All members of the team shall be designated early in the source selection process, and agencies shall provide the needed training to execute that specific source selection.

1.4.1. SSA. The SSA is the individual designated to make the best-value decision.

1.4.1.1. Appointment of SSA: The appointment of the individual to serve as the SSA shall be commensurate with the complexity and dollar value of the acquisition. For acquisitions with a total estimated value of \$100M or more, the SSA shall be an individual other than the PCO. For all other acquisitions, the PCO may serve as the SSA in accordance with FAR 15.303 unless the Agency head or designee appoints another individual.

1.4.1.2. SSA Responsibilities. The SSA shall:

1.4.1.2.1. Be responsible for the proper and efficient conduct of the source selection process in accordance with this procedure and all applicable laws and regulations.

1.4.1.2.2. Appoint the chairpersons for the SSEB and, when used, the SSAC.

1.4.1.2.3. Ensure that personnel appointed to the SST are knowledgeable of policy and procedures for properly and efficiently conducting the source selection. Ensure the SST members have the requisite acquisition experience, skills, and training necessary to execute the source selection, and ensure the highest level of team membership consistency for the duration of the selection process.

1.4.1.2.4. For major weapon system or major service acquisitions, ensure no senior leader is assigned to or performs multiple leadership roles in the source selection in accordance with DFARS 203.170(a).

1.4.1.2.5. Ensure that realistic source selection schedules are established and source selection events are conducted efficiently and effectively in meeting overall program schedules. The schedules should support proper and full compliance with source selection procedures outlined in this document and the established Source Selection Plan (SSP) for the acquisition.

1.4.1.2.6. Ensure all involved in the source selection are briefed and knowledgeable of Subsection 27(a) of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act, [41 U.S.C., Section 423](#), and FAR 3.104 regarding unauthorized disclosure of contractor bid and proposal information, as well as source selection information. Ensure that all persons receiving source selection information are instructed to comply with applicable standards of conduct (including procedures to prevent the improper disclosure of information) and sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement and a conflict of interest statement. Ensure Conflict of Interest Statements (from both Government members/advisors and non-Government team advisors) are appropriately reviewed and actual or potential conflict of interest issues are resolved prior to granting access to any source selection information. (See CFR 2635).

1.4.1.2.7. Make a determination to award without discussions or enter into discussions.

1.4.1.2.8. Select the source whose proposal offers the best value to the Government in accordance with evaluation established criteria in Section M (or a non-Uniform Contract Format (UCF) solicitation).

1.4.1.2.9. Document the rationale in the Source Selection Decision Document (SSDD) (as detailed in Chapter 4).

1.4.2. PCO. The PCO will serve as the primary business advisor and principal guidance source for the entire Source Selection.

1.4.2.1. Selection of PCO: Agencies have discretion in the selection of the individual to serve as the PCO. However, the PCO, as the principal guidance source, should have experience in the source selection process.

1.4.2.2. PCO Responsibilities. The PCO shall:

1.4.2.2.1 Manage all business aspects of the acquisition and advise and assist the SSA in the execution of the responsibilities as outlined in 1.4.1, and work with the SSEB Chair to ensure the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the evaluation criteria specified in the solicitation.

1.4.2.2.2. Ensure that required approvals are obtained and the appropriate notification clause is included in the solicitation before non-Government personnel are allowed to provide source selection support (e.g. FAR 7.503 and 37.205).

1.4.2.2.3. In accordance with FAR 3.104 and DFARS 203.104, ensure that procedures exist to safeguard source selection information and contractor bid or proposal information. Approve access to or release of source selection information and contractor bid or proposal information after consulting Legal Counsel before and after contract award.

1.4.2.2.4. Maintain as a minimum, the documents and source selection evaluation records as detailed in Chapter 4.

1.4.2.2.5. Release the final solicitation only after obtaining all required approvals including the SSA approval of the SSP.

1.4.2.2.6. Serve as the single point of contact for all solicitation-related inquiries from actual or prospective offerors.

1.4.2.2.7. After receipt of proposals, control exchanges with offerors in accordance with FAR 15.306.

1.4.2.2.8 With the approval of the SSA to enter discussions, establish the competitive range and enter into discussions.

1.4.3. SSAC.

1.4.3.1. Establishment and Role of SSAC.

1.4.3.1.1. The SSA establishes an SSAC to gain access to functional area expertise to provide the support the SSA requires throughout the source selection process.

1.4.3.1.2. Organizations shall establish an SSAC for acquisitions with a total estimated value of \$100M or more. An SSAC is optional for acquisitions with a total estimated value of less than \$100M.

1.4.3.1.3. The primary role of the SSAC is to provide a written comparative analysis and recommendation to the SSA. When an SSAC is established, it will provide oversight to the SSEB.

1.4.3.1.4. The SSA may convene the SSAC at any stage in the evaluation process as needed.

1.4.3.2. Composition of SSAC.

1.4.3.2.1. The SSAC is comprised of an SSAC Chairperson and SSAC Members.

1.4.3.2.2. SSAC Members should represent the specific functional areas from which the SSA may require expertise.

1.4.3.3. Responsibilities of SSAC.

1.4.3.3.1 SSAC Chairperson shall:

1.4.3.3.1.1. Appoint SSAC members, subject to SSA approval.

1.4.3.3.2. The SSAC Members shall:

1.4.3.3.2.1. Review the evaluation results of the SSEB to ensure the evaluation process follows the evaluation criteria and the ratings are appropriately and consistently applied.

1.4.3.3.2.2. Consolidate the advice and recommendations from the SSAC into a written comparative analysis and recommendation for use by the SSA in

making the best-value decision. Ensure that minority opinions within the SSAC are documented and included within the comparative analysis.

1.4.4. SSEB.

1.4.4.1. Composition of the SSEB.

1.4.4.1.1. The SSEB is comprised of a Chairperson and Evaluators (also known as SSEB Members). Frequently, the SSEB Members will be organized into functional teams corresponding to the specific evaluation criteria (e.g., Technical Team, Past Performance Team, Cost Team, etc). In those instances, a Functional Team Lead may be utilized to consolidate the evaluation findings of the team and serve as the primary team representative to the SSEB Chair. Use of non-Government personnel as voting members of the SSEB is prohibited. (See FAR 7.503(c)(12)(ii), FAR 37.203 and FAR 37.204).

1.4.4.1.2. Government personnel assigned to the SSEB shall consider this duty as their primary responsibility. Their source selection assignment shall take priority over other work assignments. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that other work assignments do not adversely impact the source selection process.

1.4.4.2. Responsibilities of the SSEB.

1.4.4.2.1. SSEB Chairperson shall:

1.4.4.2.1.1. Be responsible for the overall management of the SSEB and act as the SSEB's interface to the SSAC (if utilized) and the SSA.

1.4.4.2.1.2. Establish functional evaluation teams, as appropriate, to support an efficient source selection evaluation. Appoint chairpersons and members to the functional evaluation teams, subject to approval of the SSA.

1.4.4.2.1.3. Ensure the skills of the personnel, the available resources, and time assigned are commensurate with the complexity of the acquisition.

1.4.4.2.1.4. Ensure members of the SSEB are trained and knowledgeable on how an evaluation is conducted prior to reviewing any proposals.

1.4.4.2.1.5. Ensure the evaluation process follows the evaluation criteria and ratings are being consistently applied.

1.4.4.2.1.6. Provide consolidated evaluation results to the SSA or the SSAC if the SSAC is designated as the interface between the SSEB and SSA.

1.4.4.2.1.7. Support any post source selection activities such as debriefings and post-award reviews/meetings, as required.

1.4.4.2.2. The SSEB members shall:

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

1.4.4.2.2.2. Ensure the evaluation is based solely on the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFP.

1.4.4.2.2.3. Assist the SSEB Chairperson in documenting the SSEB evaluation results.

1.4.4.2.2.4. Support any post-source-selection activities, such as debriefings and post-award reviews/meetings, as required.

1.4.4.2.3. Neither the SSEB Chairperson nor the SSEB members shall perform comparative analysis of proposals or make source selection recommendations unless requested by the SSA.

1.4.5. Advisors.

1.4.5.1. Government Advisors. When an SSAC is not used, consideration should be given to the use of Government advisors to assist the SSA. These advisors can provide expertise within specific functional areas, similar to the involvement of the SSAC, but need not provide the formal written comparative analysis required of an SSAC. Government advisors may also be used to provide assistance to the SSEB as subject-matter experts.

1.4.5.2. Non-Government Advisors. Use of non-Government personnel as advisors may be authorized, but should be minimized as much as possible. Non-Government advisors, other than Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), shall be supported by a written determination based on FAR 37.203 and 37.204.

1.4.5.2.1. Requirements for use of non-Government advisors. All non-Government advisors shall sign the non-disclosure agreement required to be signed by all Government employees who are participating in the source selection. They shall also submit documentation to the PCO indicating their personal stock holdings prior to being allowed access to source selection sensitive information. In addition, the PCO must ensure that before the non-Government advisor is given access to proprietary information, that the Government has received the consent of the submitting contractor(s) to provide access to the contractor who is to assist in the source selection.

1.4.5.2.2. Limitations on use of non-Government advisors. Non-Government advisors may assist in and provide input regarding the evaluation, but they may not determine ratings or rankings of offerors' proposals. Disclosure of past

performance information to non-Government personnel is strictly prohibited (reference DoD Contractor Performance Assessment Report System (CPARS) Policy Guide, Architect-Engineer Contract Administration Support System (ACASS) Policy Guide, and Construction Contractor Appraisal Support System (CCASS) Policy Guide). Accordingly, non-Government advisors shall not participate in the review and evaluation of past performance information. (See FAR 42.1503).

1.5. Program Management/Requirements Office Roles and Responsibilities

The requirements community is vital to the success of the overall source selection process. The leadership of the Program Management/Requirements Office shall:

1.5.1 Ensure the technical requirements—consistent with the cognizant requirements document—are approved and stable, establish technical specifications, and develop a Statement of Work (SOW), Statement of Objectives (SOO), or Performance Work Statement (PWS).

1.5.2. Allocate the necessary resources including personnel, funding and facilities to support the source selection process.

1.5.3. Assist in the establishment of the SST to include serving as an advisor or member to the SSAC and/or the SSEB as needed.

1.5.4. Assist in the development of the evaluation criteria consistent with the technical requirements/risk.

Chapter 2

Pre-Solicitation Activities

2.1 Conduct Acquisition Planning

2.1.1. Acquisition Planning. Appropriate acquisition planning is paramount for a successful source selection. FAR subpart 7.1 and DFARS subpart 207.1 address policies related to acquisition planning and development of written Acquisition Plans.

2.1.1.1. Requirements. The SST is responsible for maintaining effective liaison with the requiring office to ensure requirements are effectively addressed within the requirements documents.

2.1.1.2. Risk Assessment. The requiring office—in conjunction with the acquisition team members, initial membership of the SST, and stakeholders—shall conduct the risk analysis in accordance with FAR 7.105 necessary to support the acquisition planning process. This assessment will be critical in developing evaluation factors.

2.1.1.3. Acquisition of Services. Existing DoD policy requires all non-information technology (IT) service acquisition over \$1B (\$500M for acquisition of IT services) to have their acquisition strategy reviewed and approved by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD(AT&L)), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration (ASD(NII)), or their designees (see DoD Instruction (DODI) 5000.2, Enclosure 9). Specifically, senior officials of the Military Departments and decision authorities in DoD Components outside the Military Departments shall, before the final solicitation is issued, notify the USD(AT&L), Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy (DPAP) of any proposed acquisition of non-IT services with a total estimated value over \$1 billion (base year(s) and options), or the ASD(NII)/DoD Chief Information Officer of any proposed acquisition of IT services with a total estimated value over \$500 million (base year(s) and options). Reference DODI 5000.02, Enclosure 9, Acquisition of Services, for specific requirements and further instructions.

2.1.1.4. Independent Management Reviews (“Peer Reviews”). Pre-Award Peer Reviews shall be conducted on all Supplies and Services, solicitations, and contracts over \$1B (including options). The Director, DPAP, in the Office of the USD(AT&L), shall organize the Peer Reviews. The reviews shall be advisory in nature and conducted in a manner that preserves the authority, judgment, and discretion of the PCO and senior officials of the acquiring organization. Reference DFARS 201.170 and DODI 5000.02, Enclosure 2, Section 9 and Enclosure 9, Section 6 for specific requirements for these Pre-Award Peer Reviews of Services and Supply contracts over \$1B. Finally, Pre-Award procedures in Paragraph 6.a. of Enclosure 9 shall also apply to Peer Reviews of Supplies. (Reference Enclosure 2, Procedures Section 9, Paragraph g, of DODI 5000.02.) The acquisition team must build these

review requirements into their acquisition planning milestones. (See DFARS 201.170 and PGI 201.170).

2.1.2. Market Research. Market research is essential to identifying capabilities within the market to satisfy the agency's needs and is key in determining whether a commercial item or small business can meet the Government's needs. Market research significantly influences the work statement, is central to designing an acquisition strategy and identifying candidate evaluation criteria which influence the overall source selection process. Thorough and complete market research is the foundation of an effective source selection process toward meeting the agency's needs. See FAR 10.001 and DFARS 201.001 for requirements and benefits of conducting and documenting market research. As an effective part of Market Research, early industry involvement is vital to the source selection process. Exchanging information on upcoming acquisitions improves understanding of Government requirements and Government understanding of industry capabilities.

2.1.2.1. Industry Day(s). A vital tool in collecting information and feedback important to framing the Government's acquisition strategy is the use of industry day(s) (e.g., pre-solicitation conference, pre-proposal conference, etc.). An industry day(s) is highly recommended for all acquisitions.

2.1.2.2. Utilization of Draft Request for Proposals (RFP). The draft RFP is an important tool to seek input from industry on the Government requirement and ensure greater understanding on both sides of the acquisition. Use of a draft RFP is highly recommended for all acquisitions. The specific content of the draft RFP will be determined by the PCO.

2.2. Develop an SSP

An SSP is required for all best-value, negotiated, competitive acquisitions under FAR Part 15. The SSA shall approve the SSP before the final solicitation is issued. At a minimum, the SSP shall include:

2.2.1. Background and Objectives. Include a brief description of the requirement, a summary of the objectives, and any reference to applicable guidance.

2.2.2. Acquisition Strategy. Provide a summary of the planned acquisition approach to include a description of how the specific acquisition being competed fits into the entire program.

2.2.3. SST. Describe the organizational structure and identify the various roles and responsibilities of each of the source selection teams, such as the SSET, the SSAC, the PCO, and the SSA, during the phases of the source selection. List members and advisors by name, position title, company affiliation, if applicable, or by functional area. (See PGI 215.303).

2.2.4. Communications. Describe the process and controls for communication with industry as well as internal Government team communication, to include the use of e-mail, during the source selection, and outline the security measures that will be utilized to ensure the information is protected as source selection information. (See FAR 2.101 and FAR 3.104.)

2.2.5. Evaluation Factors and Subfactors. Identify the evaluation factors, subfactors, their relative order of importance; the importance of all non-cost or price factors to the cost or price factor; and the evaluation process, including specific procedures and techniques to be used in evaluating proposals. Include within the SSP document or attach the relevant and most current portions of Sections L and M in the RFP (or a non-UCF solicitation) to preclude inconsistencies between the SSP and RFP.

2.2.6. Documentation. Identify the types of documents that will be prepared during the course of the source selection, to include at a minimum an SSEB Report covering the initial evaluation, updated as necessary following responses to discussion questions, and a final SSEB Report after receipt of Final Proposal Revisions, an SSAC Report, if there is an SSAC, which reflects the SSAC's consideration of the final SSET Report and makes the SSAC's recommendation to the Source Selection Authority, and in accordance with FAR 15.308, the Source Selection Decision Document (SSDD), which reflects the SSA's independent determination. A power point presentation is acceptable to brief the SSA and the SSAC on the status of the procurement, but should not as a general rule, constitute the official Reports required for the source selection.

2.2.7. Schedule of Events. List the major acquisition activities and projected completion dates. Reference 2.1.1.4, 2.1.2.1, and 2.1.2.2 for information on the use of independent management reviews, Industry Days, and draft RFPs as significant source selection activities.

2.2.8. Non-Government Personnel. Address the use of non-Government personnel and compliance with requirements of 1.4.5.2.

2.2.9. Securing Source Selection Materials. Detail the plan for securing all source selection materials throughout the evaluation process.

2.3. Develop the Request for Proposals

A well-written RFP is absolutely critical to the success of the source selection. There shall be consistency between the requirements documents, SSP, and RFP. The acquisition team must ensure a clear linkage between the requirements and evaluation factors to maximize the accuracy and clarity of the RFP.

2.3.1. Evaluation factors and subfactors represent those specific characteristics that are tied to significant RFP requirements and objectives having an impact on the source selection decision and are expected to be discriminators, or are required by statute/regulation. They are the uniform baseline against which each offeror's proposal is

evaluated allowing the Government to make a best-value determination. The evaluation of factors and subfactors may be quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of both. However, numerical or percentage weighting of the relative importance of evaluation factors and subfactors shall not be used. The evaluation factors and subfactors, their relative order of importance, and the importance of non-cost or price factors to cost or price factors shall be set forth in the solicitation in enough depth to communicate what will be evaluated. The evaluation factors and subfactors shall be the primary determinant of the detailed information requested in the solicitation's instructions to offerors. If subfactors are used, they are to be evaluated separately. All source selections shall evaluate cost or price, and the quality of the product or services.

2.3.1.1. Cost or Price. The Government shall evaluate the cost or price of the supplies or services being acquired. See 3.1.1 for more information.

2.3.1.2 Quality of Product or Service. In accordance with FAR 15.304(c)(2), the quality of product or service shall be addressed in every source selection through consideration of one or more non-cost evaluation factors such as past performance, compliance with solicitation requirements, technical excellence, management capability, personnel qualifications, and prior experience.

All source selection evaluations shall utilize one or more quality of product or service evaluation factors tailored to the source selection process employed.

The term "technical," as used below and throughout the document, refers to non-cost factors other than past performance. More than one "technical" factor can be used and titled to match the specific evaluation criteria appropriate for the RFP. However, the ratings in Tables 1, 2, and 3 shall be used for all quality of product or service factors other than past performance, regardless of the "technical" factor title.

2.3.1.2.1. Technical. The purpose of the technical factor(s) is to assess the offeror's proposed approach, as detailed in its proposal, to satisfy the Government's requirements. There are many aspects which may affect an offeror's ability to meet the solicitation requirements. Examples include technical approach, risk, management approach, personnel qualifications, facilities, and others. The evaluation of risk is related to the technical assessment.

Technical Risk. Risk assesses the degree to which the offeror's proposed technical approach for the requirements of the solicitation may cause disruption of schedule, increased costs, degradation of performance, the need for increased Government oversight, or the likelihood of unsuccessful contract performance. All evaluations that include a technical evaluation factor shall also consider risk. Risk can be evaluated in one of two ways:

- As one aspect of the technical evaluation, inherent in the technical evaluation factor or subfactor ratings (reference 3.1.2.1).

- As a separate risk rating assigned at the technical factor or subfactor level (reference 3.1.2.2).

Finally, the technical factor may be divided into subfactors that represent the specific areas that are significant enough to be discriminators and to have an impact on the source selection decision. When subfactors are used, establish the minimum number necessary for the evaluation of proposals.

2.3.1.2.2. Past Performance. The past performance evaluation factor assesses the degree of confidence the Government has in an offeror's ability to supply products and services that meet users' needs, based on a demonstrated record of performance. A past performance evaluation is required in accordance with Director of Defense Procurement Class Deviation 99-O0002 dated January 29, 1999, which states the requirement thresholds are: (1) \$5 million for systems and operations support; (2) \$1 million for services, IT; and (3) \$100,000 for fuels or health care. A past performance evaluation may be accomplished for acquisitions below these thresholds at the discretion of the SSA. Past performance need not be evaluated if the PCO documents the reason past performance is not an appropriate evaluation factor for the acquisition (see FAR 15.304(c)(3)(iii)).

2.3.1.2.3. Small Business. Where required by FAR 15.304(c), FAR 19.1202, and DFARS 215.304(c)(i), the SST shall evaluate the extent of participation of small business concerns. This may be accomplished by one of the following:

- Establishing a separate Small Business Participation evaluation factor,
- Establishing a Small Business Participation subfactor under the technical factor, or
- Considering Small Business Participation within the evaluation of one of the technical subfactors.

2.3.2. Relative Importance of Factors. The solicitation shall state, at a minimum, whether all evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are (1) significantly more important than cost or price; (2) approximately equal to cost or price; or (3) significantly less important than cost or price. (FAR 15.101)

2.4. Release the Request for Proposals

Use of a draft RFP is highly recommended. The specific content of the draft RFP will be determined by the PCO. Prior to release of the final RFP, a thorough, consolidated review by a multi-disciplined team is recommended

Chapter 3

Evaluation and Decision Process

3.1. Evaluation Activities

The SSEB shall conduct an in-depth review of each proposal against the factors and subfactors established in the solicitation, and assign evaluation ratings.

3.1.1. Cost or Price Evaluation. Cost or price to the Government shall be evaluated in every source selection. However, no adjectival ratings shall be utilized for evaluating cost or price since cost or price is not rated. The level of detail of analysis required will vary among acquisitions depending on the complexity and circumstances of the acquisition, including the degree of competition, the phase of the program, the type of product/services to be acquired, and the contract type. In order to enable offerors to make informed decisions on how best to propose, every solicitation will provide an adequate description of the cost or price evaluation. In all source selections, the analysis must include a determination, by the PCO, of whether the proposed cost or price is fair and reasonable. In addition to determining reasonableness of the proposed cost or price, the PCO must also conduct a cost realism analysis if contracting on a cost reimbursement basis. Cost realism analysis may also be used on competitive, fixed-price incentive contracts or, in exceptional cases, on other competitive fixed-price-type contracts. FAR Subpart 15.4 and the Contract Pricing Reference Guides (http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/cpf/contract_pricing_reference_guides.html) provide additional guidance on cost or price evaluation.

3.1.2. Technical Rating Evaluation Processes. The technical rating reflects the degree to which the proposed approach meets or does not meet the minimum performance or capability requirements through an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and risks of a proposal.

As referenced in 2.3.1.2.1, one of two distinct methodologies can be used to evaluate the technical approach and related risk. Methodology 1, outlined at 3.1.2.1, includes risk associated with the technical approach in a single rating. Methodology 2, outlined at 3.1.2.2, provides separate technical and risk ratings.

3.1.2.1. Methodology 1: Combined Technical/Risk Rating. The combined technical/risk rating includes consideration of risk in conjunction with the strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies in determining technical ratings. Combined technical/risk evaluations shall utilize the combined technical/risk ratings listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Combined Technical/Risk Ratings		
Color	Rating	Description
Blue	Outstanding	Proposal meets requirements and indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements. Strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. Risk of unsuccessful performance is very low.
Purple	Good	Proposal meets requirements and indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements. Proposal contains strengths which outweigh any weaknesses. Risk of unsuccessful performance is low.
Green	Acceptable	Proposal meets requirements and indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements. Strengths and weaknesses are offsetting or will have little or no impact on contract performance. Risk of unsuccessful performance is no worse than moderate.
Yellow	Marginal	Proposal does not clearly meet requirements and has not demonstrated an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements. The proposal has one or more weaknesses which are not offset by strengths. Risk of unsuccessful performance is high.
Red	Unacceptable	Proposal does not meet requirements and contains one or more deficiencies. Proposal is unawardable.

3.1.2.2. Methodology 2: Separate Technical/Risk Rating Process.

3.1.2.2.1. Technical Rating. The offeror's technical solution will be rated separately from the risk associated with its technical approach. The technical rating evaluates the quality of the offeror's technical solution for meeting the Government's requirement. The risk rating considers the risk associated with the technical approach in meeting the requirement. Technical evaluations shall utilize the ratings listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Technical Ratings		
Color	Rating	Description
Blue	Outstanding	Proposal meets requirements and indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements. The proposal contains multiple strengths and no deficiencies.
Purple	Good	Proposal meets requirements and indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements. Proposal contains at least one strength and no deficiencies.
Green	Acceptable	Proposal meets requirements and indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements. Proposal has no strengths or deficiencies.
Yellow	Marginal	Proposal does not clearly meet requirements and has not demonstrated an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements.
Red	Unacceptable	Proposal does not meet requirements and contains one or more deficiencies and is unawardable.

3.1.2.2.2. Technical Risk Rating. Assessment of technical risk, which is manifested by the identification of weakness(es), considers potential for disruption of schedule, increased costs, degradation of performance, the need for increased Government oversight, or the likelihood of unsuccessful contract performance. Technical risk shall be rated using the ratings listed in Table 3. For firm-fixed-price contracts, the reference to increased cost may be removed from the risk rating descriptions.

Table 3. Technical Risk Ratings	
Rating	Description
Low	Has little potential to cause disruption of schedule, increased cost or degradation of performance. Normal contractor effort and normal Government monitoring will likely be able to overcome any difficulties.
Moderate	Can potentially cause disruption of schedule, increased cost or degradation of performance. Special contractor emphasis and close Government monitoring will likely be able to overcome difficulties.
High	Is likely to cause significant disruption of schedule, increased cost or degradation of performance. Is unlikely to overcome any difficulties, even with special contractor emphasis and close Government monitoring.

3.1.3. Past Performance Evaluation. The past performance evaluation results in an assessment of the offeror's probability of meeting the solicitation requirements. The past performance evaluation considers each offeror's demonstrated recent and relevant record of performance in supplying products and services that meet the contract's requirements. One performance confidence assessment rating is assigned for each offeror after evaluating the offeror's recent past performance, focusing on performance that is relevant to the contract requirements. See FAR 15.305.

3.1.3.1. There are two aspects to the past performance evaluation. The first is to evaluate the offeror's past performance to determine how relevant a recent effort accomplished by the offeror is to the effort to be acquired through the source selection. The criteria to establish what is recent and relevant shall be unique to each source selection and shall be stated in the solicitation. In establishing what is relevant for the acquisition, consideration should be given to those aspects of an offeror's contract history that would give the greatest ability to measure whether the offeror will satisfy the current procurement. Common aspects of relevancy include similarity of service/support, complexity, dollar value, contract type, and degree of subcontract/teaming.

There are four levels of relevancy as shown in Table 4. When source selections require a greater level of discrimination within the past performance evaluation, the SST shall use all four of the relevancy ratings identified below. However, for those source selections requiring less discrimination in the past performance evaluation, the past performance evaluation team may use, as a minimum, "Relevant" and "Not Relevant" past performance ratings. The SSP shall clearly identify the treatment of relevancy within past performance evaluation. With respect to relevancy, more relevant past performance will typically be a stronger predictor of future success and have more influence on the past performance confidence assessment than past performance of lesser relevance.

Rating	Definition
Very Relevant	Present/past performance effort involved essentially the same scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.
Relevant	Present/past performance effort involved similar scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.
Somewhat Relevant	Present/past performance effort involved some of the scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.
Not Relevant	Present/past performance effort involved little or none of the scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.

The second aspect of the past performance evaluation is to determine how well the contractor performed on the contracts. The past performance evaluation performed in support of a current source selection does not establish, create, or change the existing record and history of the offeror’s past performance on past contracts; rather, the past performance evaluation process gathers information from customers on how well the offeror performed those past contracts. Requirements for considering history of small business utilization are outlined at FAR 15.304(c)(3)(ii) and DFARS 215.305(a)(2).

3.1.3.2. Sources of Past Performance Information for Evaluation are as follows:

- Past performance information may be provided by the offeror, as solicited.
- Past performance information may be obtained from questionnaires tailored to the circumstances of the acquisition.
- Past performance information shall be obtained from any other sources available to the Government, to include, but not limited to, the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PIRS), Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), Electronic Subcontract Reporting System (eSRS), or other databases; interviews with Program Managers, Contracting Officers, and Fee Determining Officials; and the Defense Contract Management Agency.

The Past Performance Evaluation Team will review this past performance information and determine the quality and usefulness as it applies to performance confidence assessment.

3.1.3.3. Performance Confidence Assessment. In conducting a performance confidence assessment, each offeror shall be assigned one of the ratings in Table 5. (Reference FAR 15.305(2) for information on assigning an unknown/neutral confidence rating.)

Table 5. Performance Confidence Assessments	
Rating	Description
Substantial Confidence	Based on the offeror's recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a high expectation that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort.
Satisfactory Confidence	Based on the offeror's recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a reasonable expectation that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort.
Limited Confidence	Based on the offeror's recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a low expectation that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort.
No Confidence	Based on the offeror's recent/relevant performance record, the Government has no expectation that the offeror will be able to successfully perform the required effort.
Unknown Confidence (Neutral)	No recent/relevant performance record is available or the offeror's performance record is so sparse that no meaningful confidence assessment rating can be reasonably assigned.

3.1.3.4. Small Business Evaluation. When required by 2.3.1.2.3, the SST shall evaluate the extent of participation of small business concerns. (Reference 2.3.1 for evaluation methodologies.) The ratings utilized for the small business evaluation will be dependent on the small business evaluation methodology utilized.

3.1.3.4.1 When evaluating small business participation as a stand-alone evaluation factor or a subfactor under the technical factor, there are two rating options as follows:

3.1.3.4.1.1. Use the ratings acceptable and unacceptable only (i.e., pass/fail), or

3.1.3.4.1.2. Utilize all ratings outlined in Table 1 or 2, depending on the treatment of risk. References to the term "requirements" in the technical rating description at Table 1 or 2 shall equate to small business requirements, often reflected in the RFP as small business objectives.

3.1.3.4.2. When small business participation is not evaluated as a stand-alone evaluation factor or subfactor but instead is considered within the evaluation of one of the technical subfactors, a separate small business rating is not applied. However, the small business participation shall be considered in determining the appropriate technical rating to be applied. References to the term "requirements"

in the technical ratings description at Table 1 or 2 shall equate to small business requirements, often reflected in the RFP as small business objectives.

3.2. Documentation of Initial Evaluation Results

3.2.1. Following the initial round of evaluations, the SSEB Chairperson will consolidate the inputs from each of the evaluation teams for presentation to the SSA. The PCO and the SSEB Chairperson shall ensure that proposals are evaluated solely on the criteria contained in Section M (or a non-UCF solicitation). All evaluation records and narratives shall be reviewed by the PCO, Legal Counsel, and the SSEB Chairperson for completeness and compliance with the solicitation. When an SSAC has been established, it will consolidate the advice and recommendations from the SSAC into a written comparative analysis and recommendation for use by the SSA in making the best-value decision. It will ensure that minority opinions within the SSAC are documented and included within the comparative analysis

3.2.2. Based upon review of the initial evaluation results the SSA will decide to either (1) approve award without discussions, or (2) enter into the discussion process.

3.3. Award without Discussions

3.3.1. The SSA may choose, in rare circumstances, to award a contract on the basis of the initial proposals received without conducting discussions. Offerors may be given a chance to clarify certain aspects of their proposal and to resolve minor or clerical mistakes. However, offerors are not given an opportunity to respond to any identified weaknesses or deficiencies or revise their proposals. Instead, the SSA makes a best-value decision based upon the evaluations of the initial proposal as submitted. To award without discussions, the RFP must contain the solicitation provision at FAR 52.215-1, which notifies offerors that the Government intends to evaluate proposals and award a contract without discussions. This clause provides incentive to offerors to provide in their initial proposal their best terms from a cost or price and technical standpoint as there may not be an opportunity to revise their proposals.

3.3.2. The process of engaging with industry after proposal submission affords the Government the opportunity to effectively understand and evaluate a proposal and permits industry the opportunity to clearly explain any aspects of a proposal that appear to be deficient, ambiguous or non-compliant. Such dialogue leads to more efficient, effective and improved source selections. Therefore, award without discussions shall occur in only limited circumstances.

3.3.3. If the SSA chooses to award without discussions, the SSA shall prepare a SSDD (reference 3.9). Once the SSDD is signed and all contractual requirements have been met (e.g., Congressional Notification, Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance.), the PCO may award the contract.

3.4 Discussion Process

3.4.1. Discussions are highly recommended for source selections. The primary objective of discussions is to maximize the Government's ability to obtain best value, based on the requirement and the evaluation factors set forth in the solicitation.

3.4.2. If discussions are to be conducted, the PCO shall, with the approval of the SSA, establish a competitive range based on the ratings of each proposal against all evaluation criteria (see FAR 15.306(c)). Prior to the establishment of the competitive range, and after the decision to conduct discussions has been made, the PCO may enter into limited communications with offerors whose inclusion or exclusion from the competitive range is uncertain. These communications are limited in accordance with FAR 15.306(b)(1). The establishment of the competitive range is formally documented by the PCO in a competitive range determination. The PCO will only enter discussions with those offerors determined to be in the competitive range.

3.4.3. Discussions are tailored to each offeror's proposal and must be conducted by the PCO with every offeror within the competitive range. The scope and extent of discussions are a matter of PCO judgment. As a minimum, during discussions, the SSEB through the PCO shall indicate to, or discuss with, each offeror in the competitive range the following: (a) any adverse past performance information to which the offeror has not yet had an opportunity to respond, (b) significant weaknesses, and (c) any deficiencies that have been identified during the evaluation. This is accomplished through the release of Evaluation Notices (ENs). ENs are prepared by the SSEB and reviewed by the PCO and Legal Counsel. All ENs shall clearly indicate the type of exchange being conducted (e.g. clarification, communication, etc). Any EN addressing a proposal deficiency or weakness shall clearly indicate that a deficiency/weakness exists. The PCO is encouraged to discuss other aspects of the offeror's proposal that could in the opinion of the PCO be altered or explained to enhance materially the proposal's potential for award. However, the PCO is not required to discuss every area where the proposal could be improved as outlined at FAR 15.306(d) and (e). All discussions shall be documented in writing.

3.5 Final Proposal Revisions

3.5.1. At the conclusion of discussions, each offeror still within the competitive range shall be given an opportunity to submit a Final Proposal Revision (FPR) by a common cutoff date and time, as established by the PCO (FAR 15.307(b)). When the PCO is not the SSA, the PCO shall obtain the SSA's concurrence prior to releasing the FPR request.

3.5.2. After receipt of the FPR, the SSEB shall complete evaluation of the FPR. The evaluation criteria from Section M or equivalent solicitation provision shall continue to be the basis for evaluation.

3.6. Documentation of Final Evaluation Results

3.6.1. The SSEB shall prepare documentation of the evaluation results. The format should be in a written narrative report, although in rare instances, a decision briefing may be acceptable, depending on the complexity of the acquisition. The report shall be in sufficient detail to serve as a clear and concise record of the source selection decision and shall be included in the contract file. When only a decision briefing is utilized, it should contain supporting narrative or note pages to serve as a complete record of the decision process. The report or briefing charts with supporting narratives or script must be suitable to serve as the official record of SSEB proceedings in support of source selections. However, additional documentation of the SSEB proceedings may be maintained in accordance with Agency/Service supplements. The results of the evaluation shall be presented to the SSAC (when used) and to the SSA.

3.6.2. In the event that there is significant disagreement among the SSEB members regarding the evaluation results that should be presented to the SSAC (when used) and the SSA, a minority opinion(s) shall also be presented at the decision briefing providing the SSA with sufficient information to fully consider the minority view(s).

3.7. Conduct and Documentation of Comparative Analysis

3.7.1. The SSAC, if utilized, shall review the evaluation and findings of the SSEB to ensure their accuracy, consistency, and supportability in accordance with the evaluation criteria and shall provide advice, analysis, briefings, and consultation as requested by the SSA. This will culminate in a written comparative analysis of proposals and award recommendation for the SSA's consideration.

3.7.2. In the event that there is significant disagreement among the SSAC members regarding the recommendation, a minority opinion shall be documented and presented to the SSA as part of the comparative analysis.

3.7.3. If an SSAC is not utilized, the SSEB should not conduct a comparative analysis of the proposals or make an award recommendation unless specifically requested by the SSA or required by the SSP.

3.8. Best-Value Decision

3.8.1. The SSA shall select the source whose proposal offers the best value to the Government in accordance with established criteria in Section M or equivalent solicitation provision (see FAR Part 12).

3.8.2. This best-value decision shall be based on a comparative assessment of proposals against all source selection criteria in the solicitation, considering recommendations and minority opinions presented to the SSA. While the SSA may use reports and analyses prepared by others, the source selection decision shall represent the SSA's independent judgment.

3.8.3. The SSA shall document the supporting rationale in the SSDD.

3.9. Source Selection Decision Document

3.9.1. An SSDD shall be prepared for all source selections; shall reflect the SSA's independent, integrated, comparative assessment and decision; shall include the rationale for any business judgments- tradeoffs made or relied on by the SSA (e.g., including benefits associated with additional costs); and shall be included in the source selection file. The SSDD shall be the single summary document supporting selection of the best-value proposal consistent with the stated evaluation criteria; it shall clearly explain the decision and document the reasoning used by the SSA to reach the decision consistent with FAR 15.308.

3.9.2. The SSDD is fully releasable to the Government Accountability Office and others authorized to receive proprietary and source selection information. When releasing a copy of the SSDD to offerors or to anyone not authorized to receive proprietary and source selection information, redacted material shall be limited to that which is proprietary and that which shall continue to be protected as source selection information. The need to redact such information is not a sufficient reason to refrain from preparing a properly written SSDD.

3.10. Debriefings

The PCO shall ensure offerors are debriefed, if requested, in accordance with FAR 15.505 and FAR 15.506, as applicable. The PCO shall document the debriefing(s) provided to offeror(s). At the request of the PCO, members of the SST shall participate in debriefings to offerors. The PCO is encouraged to use the debriefing guide provided in Appendix B.

Chapter 4

Documentation Requirements

At a minimum, the following Source Selection Documents must be maintained in the contract file:

- 4.1. The SSP and any revisions thereto.
- 4.2. Non-disclosure and conflict of interest statements.
- 4.3. The draft RFP, along with all comments received and Government responses thereto, if a draft RFP is issued.
- 4.4. The RFP, any amendments thereto, and FPR request.
- 4.5. Past performance information (e.g., questionnaires; interviews; CPARS reports).
- 4.6. Offeror proposals, including all revisions, annotated with the date of receipt.
- 4.7. Competitive range and supporting documentation.
- 4.8. ENs, responses, and Government evaluation thereof.
- 4.9. Evaluation results (SSEB evaluation report and SSAC evaluation report if there was an SSAC).
- 4.10. Any comparative analysis and recommendations provided to the SSA.
- 4.11. The SSDD.
- 4.12. Debriefing documents.
- 4.13. Approval documentation (e.g., determination to award without discussions, FPR approval, etc.).

Chapter 5

Definitions

- 5.1. Clarifications** are limited exchanges between the Government and offerors that may occur when award without discussions is contemplated.
- 5.2. Communications** are exchanges, between the Government and offerors, after receipt of proposals, leading to establishment of the competitive range.
- 5.3. Competitive Range** See FAR 15.306(c).
- 5.4. Deficiency** is 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. See FAR 15.001.
- 5.5. Discussions** are negotiations conducted in a competitive acquisition. Discussions take place after establishment of the competitive range.
- 5.6. Evaluation Notice (EN)** is the PCO's written notification to the offeror for purposes of clarifications, communications, or in support of discussions.
- 5.7. Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA)** is a process used in competitive negotiated contracting where the best value is expected to result from selection of the technically acceptable proposal with the lowest evaluated price. See FAR 15.101-2.
- 5.8. Performance Confidence Assessment** is an evaluation of the likelihood (or Government's confidence) that the offeror will successfully perform the solicitation's requirements; the evaluation is based upon past performance information.
- 5.9. Recency**, as it pertains to past performance information, is a measure of the time that has elapsed since the past performance reference occurred. Recency is generally expressed as a time period during which past performance references are considered relevant.
- 5.10. Relevancy**, as it pertains to past performance information, is a measure of the extent of similarity between the service/support effort, complexity, dollar value, contract type, and subcontract/teaming or other comparable attributes of past performance examples and the source solicitation requirements; and a measure of the likelihood that the past performance is an indicator of future performance.
- 5.11. Requirements Documents** are all aspects of the RFP that convey the needs of the Government to offerors, including the SOO, SOW, PWS, technical requirement documents, and system requirement documents.

5.12. *Requiring Office* is the entity (for example, a program management office or other organizational entity) responsible for translating user requirements into the requirements documents within the RFP that communicate those requirements to offerors.

5.13. *Risk*, as it pertains to source selection, is the potential for unsuccessful contract performance. The consideration of risk assesses the degree to which an offeror's proposed approach to achieving the technical factor or subfactor may involve risk of disruption of schedule, increased cost or degradation of performance, the need for increased Government oversight, and the likelihood of unsuccessful contract performance. (For firm-fixed-price contracts, the reference to increased cost may be removed from the risk definition.)

5.14. *Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC)* is a group of senior Government personnel who provide counsel during the source selection process and must prepare the comparative analysis of the SSEB's evaluation results, when directed by the SSA.

5.15. *Source Selection Authority (SSA)* is the official designated to make the source selection decision.

5.16. *Source Selection Team (SST)* is a team that is tailored to the unique acquisition, tasked with carrying out a source selection. Composition of the team generally consists of the SSA, PCO (if different from the SSA), SSAC, SSEB, Advisors, Cost or Price Experts, Legal Counsel, Small Business Specialists, and other subject-matter experts.

5.17. *Significant Weakness* in the proposal is a flaw that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance. See FAR 15.001.

5.18. *Source Selection Decision Document (SSDD)* is the document that reflects the SSA's independent, integrated, comparative assessment and decision.

5.19. *Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB)* is a group of Government and, if needed, approved non-Government personnel, representing the various functional disciplines relevant to the acquisition.

5.20. *Source Selection Plan (SSP)* is a plan that describes how the source selection will be organized, how proposals will be evaluated and analyzed, and how source(s) will be selected.

5.21. *Strength* is an aspect of an offeror's proposal that has merit or exceeds specified performance or capability requirements in a way that will be advantageous to the Government during contract performance.

5.22. *Weakness* means a flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance. See FAR 15.001.



Appendix A

***Lowest Price Technically Acceptable
Source Selection Process***

Table of Contents

A.1.	Introduction	A-1
A.2.	Evaluation Factors and Subfactors	A-1
A.3.	Sources of Past Performance Information for Evaluation	A-3
A.4.	Small Business Participation	A-3
A.5.	Price	A-4
A.6.	Best-Value Decision and Documentation	A-4

Preface

When using the LPTA source selection process, Chapters 1 through 5 of the tradeoff source selection process apply, with the exception of 3.1, 3.7, and 3.8. In addition, the comparative analysis discussed in Chapters 1 through 5 is not required for LPTA. Requirements for evaluation factors/subfactors, the evaluation process, and the best-value decision are established below.

A.1. Introduction

The LPTA process is appropriate when best value is expected to result from selection of the technically acceptable proposal with the lowest evaluated price. LPTAs may be used in situations where the Government would not realize any value from a proposal exceeding the Government's minimum technical or performance requirements, often for acquisitions of commercial or non-complex services or supplies which are clearly defined and expected to be low risk. The LPTA process does not permit tradeoffs between price and non-price factors. See FAR 15.101-2.

A.2. Evaluation Factors and Subfactors

Evaluation factors and subfactors represent those specific characteristics that are tied to significant RFP requirements. They are the uniform baseline against which each offeror's proposal is evaluated allowing the Government to make a determination of acceptability. The evaluation factors and subfactors shall be set forth in the solicitation in enough depth to communicate what will be evaluated. The evaluation factors and subfactors shall be the primary determinant of the detailed information requested in the solicitation's instructions to offerors. If subfactors are used, they are to be evaluated separately. The SST will establish the factors and subfactors to be evaluated on an "acceptable" or "unacceptable" basis. These factors and subfactors will identify the minimum requirements that are key to successful contract performance. All LPTAs shall evaluate cost/price and the acceptability of the product or services.

A.2.1. Acceptability of product or service. The acceptability of product or service shall be addressed in every LPTA source selection through consideration of one or more non-price evaluation factors/subfactors. For LPTAs, this is done through the establishment of minimum requirements to be evaluated on an "acceptable" or "unacceptable" basis. Proposals are evaluated for acceptability, but not ranked using the non-price factors/subfactors. In order to be considered awardable, there must be an "acceptable" rating in every non-price factor/subfactor. LPTA non-price factors/subfactors may include the following:

A.2.1.1. Technical. The term "technical," as used herein, refers to non-price factors other than past performance. More than one "technical" factor can be used and titled to match the specific evaluation criteria appropriate for the RFP. The purpose of the technical factor is to assess whether the offeror's proposal will satisfy the Government's minimum requirements. Some of the aspects affecting an offeror's

ability to meet the solicitation requirements may include technical approach, key personnel and qualifications, facilities, and others. Once the minimum requirements are established, the team shall evaluate the offeror’s proposal against these requirements to determine whether the proposal is acceptable or unacceptable, using the ratings and descriptions outlined in Table A-1.

Table A-1. Technical Acceptable/Unacceptable Ratings	
Rating	Description
Acceptable	Proposal clearly meets the minimum requirements of the solicitation.
Unacceptable	Proposal does not clearly meet the minimum requirements of the solicitation.

A.2.1.2. Past Performance. Past performance shall be used as an evaluation factor within the LPTA process, unless waived by the PCO in accordance with FAR 15.101-2(b). It shall be evaluated in accordance with FAR 15.305 and DFARS 215.305. However, the comparative assessment in FAR 15.305(a)(2)(i) does not apply. Therefore, past performance will be rated on an “acceptable” or “unacceptable” basis using the ratings in Table A-2.

Table A-2. Past Performance Evaluation Ratings	
Rating	Description
Acceptable	Based on the offeror’s performance record, the Government has a reasonable expectation that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort, or the offeror’s performance record is unknown. (See note below.)
Unacceptable	Based on the offeror’s performance record, the Government has no reasonable expectation that the offeror will be able to successfully perform the required effort.

Note: In the case of an offeror without a record of relevant past performance or for whom information on past performance is not available or so sparse that no meaningful past performance rating can be reasonably assigned, the offeror may not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on past performance (see FAR 15.305 (a)(2)(iv)). Therefore, the offeror shall be determined to have unknown past performance. In the context of acceptability/unacceptability, “unknown” shall be considered “acceptable.”

A.2.1.2.1 Aspects of Past Performance Evaluation. The past performance evaluation results is an assessment of the offeror’s probability of meeting the minimum past performance solicitation requirements. This assessment is based on the offeror’s record of relevant and recent past performance information that pertain to the products and/or services outlined in the solicitation requirements.

There are two aspects to the past performance evaluation. The first is to evaluate whether the offeror's present/past performance is relevant or not relevant to the effort to be acquired. The criteria to establish what is recent and relevant shall be unique to each LPTA source selection. Therefore, the solicitation shall establish the criteria for recency and relevancy in relation to the specific requirement being procured. In establishing what is relevant for the acquisition, consideration should be given to what aspects of an offeror's contract history would give the most confidence that the offeror will satisfy the current procurement.

The second aspect of the past performance evaluation is to determine how well the contractor performed on the contracts. The past performance evaluation performed in support of a current source selection does not establish, create, or change the existing record and history of the offeror's past performance on past contracts; rather, the past performance evaluation process gathers information from customers on how well the offeror performed those past contracts.

A.3 Sources of Past Performance Information for Evaluation

Sources are as follows:

- Past performance information may be provided by the offeror, as solicited.
- Past performance information may be obtained from questionnaires tailored to the circumstances of the acquisition.
- Past performance information shall be obtained from any other sources available to the Government to include, but not limited to, PPIRS or other databases; interviews with Program Managers, Contracting Officers, and Fee-Determining Officials; and the Defense Contract Management Agency.

The past performance evaluation team will review this past performance information and determine the quality and usefulness as it applies to performance competence assessment. See FAR 15.101-2(b)(1) for treatment of past performance relative to small business.

A.4. Small Business Participation

In LPTAs, small business participation is exempted from evaluation in accordance with and DFARS 215.304(c)(i). However, in the event that it is an appropriate evaluation factor, it should be considered one of the "technical" factors/subfactors.

A.5. Price

The LPTA procedure is applied to known, firm requirements, usually readily available in the commercial marketplace where a fair and reasonable price determination is based on adequate price competition. Therefore, price analysis will normally be used to determine the total

evaluated price to support the selection of the lowest priced, technically acceptable offeror. Although in exceptional cases when the determination of fair and reasonable price requires additional information, the PCO may conduct a cost analysis to support the determination of whether the proposed price is fair and reasonable. Regardless of the specific evaluation methodology, in order to enable offerors to make informed decisions on how best to propose, every solicitation will provide an adequate description of the cost or price evaluation. FAR Subpart 15.4 and Contract Pricing Reference Guides (http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/cpf/contract_pricing_reference_guides.html) provide additional guidance on cost or price evaluation.

A.6. Best-Value Decision and Documentation

A.6.1. The SSA shall select the source whose proposal offers the best value to the Government in accordance with established criteria in Section M or equivalent solicitation provision.

A.6.2. The SSA shall ensure the proposals are evaluated for acceptability but not ranked using the non-cost/price factors.

A.6.3. The SSA shall document the supporting rationale in the SSDD. The SSDD shall be the single summary document supporting selection of the best-value proposal consistent with the stated evaluation criteria.



Appendix B

Debriefing Guide

Table of Contents

B.1.	Purpose of Debriefing	B-1
B.2.	Requirements	B-1
B.3.	Notification of Debriefing	B-1
B.4.	Debriefing Location	B-1
B.5.	Debriefing Attendees	B-1
B.6.	Preparing for the Debriefing	B-2
B.7.	Outline for the Debriefing	B-2
B.8.	Conducting the Debriefing	B-3
B.9.	Sample Offeror Questions That May Be Used for “Dry Run”	B-4

B.1. Purpose of Debriefing

The PCO must debrief an offeror upon receipt of its written, timely request (See FAR 15.503 and 15.505). The debriefing serves to assure offerors that the Government properly evaluated their proposals and made the award determination in accordance with the RFP. Since each offeror puts considerable resources into preparing and submitting a proposal, fairness dictates that the PCO promptly debrief offerors and explain why a proposal was excluded from the competitive range or was successful or 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. The debriefing also provides feedback to offerors to assist in improving future proposal submissions. An effective debriefing often deters a protest by demonstrating that the Government conducted a thorough, fair evaluation and made a sound decision according to the established source selection methodology.

B.2. Requirements

See FAR 15.505, Preaward debriefing of offerors; and FAR 15.506, Postaward debriefing of offerors for requirements relative to debriefings. Also reference FAR 3.104-4, Disclosure, protection, and marking of contractor bid or proposal information and source selection information.

B.3. Notification of Debriefing

The PCO should inform the offeror of the scheduled debriefing date by electronic means with immediate acknowledgment requested. The PCO should follow up with written notification to the offeror. If the offeror requests a later date, the PCO should require the offeror to acknowledge in writing that it was offered an earlier date, but requested the later date instead.

B.4. Debriefing Location

The PCO is responsible for selecting the location of the debriefing. The location should provide a professional and non-distracting environment. Debriefings are normally held at Government facilities, however, they may be held at any facility that is mutually acceptable to all parties involved (see FAR 15.505). Although face-to-face debriefings are frequently used, the PCO 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.

B.5. Debriefing Attendees

B.5.1. Government Personnel. The PCO should normally 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 PCO's Legal Counsel should participate in preparation of the debriefing and also may attend the debriefing. Legal Counsel should attend the debriefing when the offeror's Legal Counsel will attend the debriefing. In the event there are indicators that a protest is likely, inform Legal Counsel. However, the PCO should not deny a debriefing because a protest is threatened or has already been filed.

B.5.2. Debriefed Offeror Personnel. The PCO should ask the offeror to identify all of the firm's individuals by name and position who will attend the debriefing. Normally, do not restrict the number of personnel the debriefed offeror may bring unless there are space limitations.

B.6. Preparing for the Debriefing

The PCO should ensure that documents relevant to the source selection have been thoroughly reviewed by the debriefing team and are readily available to the Government during the debrief. A best practice is to have those documents available, during the debriefing, in a separate Government caucus room.

The PCO should conduct a "dry run" prior to the actual debrief. Role-playing is a vital part of the dry run. Teams are encouraged to simulate interactions with disappointed or disgruntled offerors and practice addressing questions on contentious issues. The PCO should develop a set of anticipated questions that offerors might ask at the debriefing (See Section B.9 for sample questions). In anticipating possible questions, it is often useful to review questions asked during the discussion phase (if held) of the competition. Also, the PCO should ask each offeror scheduled for a debriefing to submit written questions in advance. The PCO should coordinate responses with Legal Counsel.

A poorly prepared debriefing is the surest way to lose the confidence of the offeror and increase the prospects of a protest. Because debriefings are time sensitive, preparation must begin before proposal evaluation is complete. The PCO should brief all Government personnel that will attend the debriefing on their roles, level of participation and expected demeanor during the debriefing.

B.7. Outline for the Debriefing

The following is a general outline for a typical debriefing. See FAR 15.505 (preaward) and FAR 15.506 (postaward) for specific requirements.

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of the Debriefing
3. Ground Rules and Agenda
4. Source Selection Process
5. Evaluation Factors/Subfactors
6. Evaluation Results for the Offeror's Proposal

7. Rationale for Eliminating Offeror from Competition (pre-award debriefing only)/ Rationale for Award Decision Based on the SSA's Decision Document (postaward debriefing only)
8. Responses to Relevant Questions
9. The PCO's statement that the debrief has concluded.

B.8 Conducting the Debriefing

B.8.1. Roles. The PCO, as the Chair, controls the debriefing. The PCO may defer to others for specific portions of the debriefing but will control all exchanges. There are many different approaches that the PCO can take in leading the debriefing. One of the common approaches is for the PCO to conduct the entire debriefing presentation and defer to his team to answer questions as needed. Another approach is for the PCO to start the debriefing and then turn over portions of the presentation to experts in those areas, e.g. Technical Team Leader presents the Technical evaluation portion of the presentation.

B.8.2. Questions. The PCO should advise offerors at the start that the Government believes the presentation will address any questions they may have. Additional questions may be answered during the debrief. The PCO should be open to discussion but not drawn into a debate. A Government caucus may be needed to address some questions. The Government should request that the questions be written for the caucus as needed.

If the debriefing team cannot adequately answer additional questions presented in writing by the offeror at the debriefing, the PCO should provide written answers as soon as possible. However, promising additional information at a later date should be avoided if possible, because the period for protest may be deemed to start from the time new relevant information is provided.

B.8.3. Information Not Appropriate for Disclosure.

B.8.3.1. The debriefing team should not disclose *documentation that was not presented to/considered by the SSA*. The crux of any postaward debriefing is the SSA award decision and whether that decision is well supported and resulted from a source selection conducted in a thorough, fair and sound manner consistent with the requirements and source selection methodology established in the RFP. The key of any preaward debrief is the offeror's elimination from the competitive range.

B.8.3.2. The debriefing team shall not discuss validity of requirements or prohibited information (see FAR 15.506(e)).

B.8.3.3. The debriefing team shall not provide names of individuals providing reference information about an offeror's past performance. In addition, the names of individuals on the SST, not participating in the debriefing, should not be disclosed. However, the name of the SSA may be revealed in postaward debriefings.

B.8.3.4. The debriefing team must not disclose any unit prices which are not freely releasable under the Freedom of Information Act. Even though the FAR includes unit prices in the list of information to be provided in a debriefing, unit prices may not be releasable.

B.8.4. Offeror Feedback. The PCO should allow the offeror an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the quality of the solicitation document, e.g., proposal instructions, the appropriateness of discussions, and the source selection process itself.

B.8.5. Debriefing documentation. The debriefing slides, the offeror's request for debriefing (if any), previously submitted questions, any handouts, a list of written questions/answers, and any other relevant documents, must be included in the source selection file.

B.9. Sample Offeror Questions That May Be Used for “Dry Run”

As referenced in Section B.6, teams are encouraged to have a dry run prior to the actual debrief. The following is a list of sample questions the team should be prepared to address during the debriefing. Answers should be tailored to the unique circumstances of each acquisition and should, where possible, be tied directly to language within the RFP (particularly Sections L and M). The “notes” below are provided as points for consideration and are not intended to be responses.

Topic Area 1: The Government’s evaluation of the significant weaknesses or deficiencies in the proposal.

- a) Please explain the basis for the strengths, weaknesses, or deficiencies in our proposal for each evaluation factor and subfactor.

NOTE: Typically this is done as part of the debriefing presentation; however, you may not disclose detailed information regarding the strengths, weaknesses and/or deficiencies in other proposals. Such a disclosure could amount to a point-by-point comparison of proposals, prohibited per FAR 15.506(e), and/or could involve disclosure of protected/privileged information. However, if a strength is evident from the awarded contract (for example, a more attractive delivery schedule) the PCO may be able to highlight that fact—consult Legal Counsel for guidance.

- b) Did you discuss all weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies?

NOTE: If discussions were held, all significant weaknesses and deficiencies, at a minimum, should have been addressed and documented. The FAR does not require discussion of all weaknesses, although it is considered a best practice.

- c) Were there any solicitation requirements that we failed to address? If so, what were they?

NOTE: If discussions were held, these matters should have been addressed and documented.

- d) How is the evaluation consistent with Sections L and M of the solicitation?
- e) Were any deficiencies identified by the Government during discussions not adequately addressed in our response to your ENs? If so, how did the evaluation of the deficiencies change during the evaluation of our FPR?
- f) Were there any specific considerations that precluded us from being selected as the awardee? If so, what were those considerations?

NOTE: If discussions were held, these matters should have been addressed.

- g) What, if anything, did the Government desire that was missing from our proposal?

NOTE: Be careful how you answer—the Government does not evaluate based on “desires” but rather on requirements contained within the RFP.

- h) Please explain how past performance was evaluated. What was our rating? How was that rating applied to the source selection process?
- i) Was experience evaluated? If so, what was our rating and how was that information used in the source selection process?
- j) Please explain the procedure for the evaluation of risk? What risks were identified in our proposal? How did they impact the rating of our proposal?

Topic Area 2: 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; and the overall ranking of all offerors, when any ranking was developed by the agency during the source selection. FAR 15.506(e): the debriefing shall not include point-by-point comparisons of the debriefed offeror’s proposal with those of other offerors. Moreover, the debriefing shall not reveal any information prohibited from disclosure by FAR 24.202 or exempt from release under the Freedom of Information Act.

- a) Please provide the evaluated cost or price and technical, management, and past performance ratings for our proposal and all other offerors.

NOTE: Information on the overall evaluated cost or price and technical ratings is not provided for all offerors; only for the successful offeror and the offeror being debriefed.

- b) Please provide the overall ranking for all offerors.

NOTE: Generally an overall ranking is not developed. However, if an overall ranking was developed during the source selection process, this shall be provided during the

debriefing. The name of every offeror shall be redacted except for the offeror being debriefed and the successful offeror(s).

- c) In what areas was our proposal considered “overpriced”?
- d) Were we compliant with all technical requirements?

NOTE: If discussions were held, these matters should have been addressed.

- e) In the risk portion of the technical/management area, what criteria did the Government use to determine the final evaluation ratings? How was this risk reflected in the other areas of the evaluation?
- f) Was there anything not required by the solicitation that we could have offered that might have made us more competitive for the award?

NOTE: An answer to this question would be conjecture, which is not appropriate.

- g) Were our responses to ENs adequate? If not, how could we have improved our responses? How were our responses to ENs on past performance evaluated?

Topic Area 3: A summary of the rationale for award.

- a) Please explain in detail the methodology used to determine which proposal offered the greatest overall value to the Government, especially with respect to any comparisons/trade-offs made between technical factors and costs proposed.
- b) Please provide a copy of the SSDD.

NOTE: If the SSDD is to be released to offerors, it should be redacted and appropriate coordination with Legal Counsel should be obtained.

Topic Area 4: Reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and other applicable authorities were followed.

NOTE: Answers to questions relative to source selection procedures should reference Section M language.

- a) Please describe the evaluation process used for this procurement.
- b) How important was cost in the source selection decision relative to past performance and technical considerations?
- c) If the costs were “normalized” please explain how the normalization was conducted.
- d) Was a cost realism analysis used? If so, please describe the process used.

- e) Did the Government prepare an independent cost estimate?
- f) What was the basis for not selecting us?

- g) Did the Government make a cost/technical trade-off?

- h) In order of importance, which evaluation criteria were the most critical to the determination of our overall rating?

- i) What were the most critical evaluation criteria that proved to be tiebreakers in the evaluation of proposals?

- j) Please identify any information not contained in our proposal that was used by the evaluators in assessing our offer.

Topic Area 5: Other potential questions.

- a) Who was on the Source Selection Advisory Committee?

NOTE: In order to prevent offerors from contacting individuals after the debriefing and to avoid creating tension in ongoing working relationships on existing Government contracts, do not disclose the names of individual evaluators or members of the SST (e.g., the SSEB, SSAC). However, those people in attendance at the debriefing should be introduced.

- b) Did the SSA and the SSAC (if applicable) fully accept the recommendations of their respective staffs (SSAC or SSEB)? If not, why not? Did either reach any independent determinations? If so, what independent determinations were made?

- c) Were there any common areas of weaknesses or deficiencies in the proposals in the competitive range?

NOTE: The debriefing team shall avoid point-by-point comparisons of proposals. In addition, providing detailed information regarding the strengths, weaknesses or deficiencies of other proposals may disclose protected/privileged information. See FAR 15.506(e).

- d) What management structure did the agency consider as optimal for performing the contract? How did our proposal rate against this standard?

NOTE: The Government does not have any preconceived ideas regarding how to meet the RFP requirements.

- e) Please identify any and all evaluation factors, subfactors, and elements not identified in the solicitation that were used to evaluate the proposals.

NOTE: There should *never* be any evaluation factors, subfactors and/or elements not identified in the solicitation that were used to evaluate proposals.