DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION JUN 0 3 2003

FROM: SAF/AQ
1060 AF Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1060

SUBJECT: Justification and Documentation of Best Value Source Selection Decisions

Justifying and documenting the source selection decision is a key aspect of the source selection process. While the Source Selection Authority (SSA) has broad discretion in making the best value source selection decision, the decision must be consistent with the evaluation factors in the solicitation. SSAs must fully document the rationale for their decisions in Source Selection Decision Documents (SSDDs).

I expect SSAs to pay particular attention to the rationale that justifies their decisions. This is especially critical when the SSA is contemplating an award to other than the lowest priced offeror. In this case, the SSA must decide if the benefits of the higher priced proposal merit the additional cost/price. Specifically, the SSA must explain in the SSDD how these benefits increase operational benefit, enhance warfighter capability, and/or provide other advantages to the Air Force. The SSA may base this explanation on either qualitative or quantitative analysis. Overall, while it is perfectly acceptable to select a higher priced proposal in a best value situation, we must be able to justify this decision by describing the additional benefits gained by doing so.

The accuracy of the best value decision and completeness of the best value decision documentation are of utmost importance when debriefing unsuccessful offerors. Unsuccessful offerors are more likely to submit a bid protest when the SSA's tradeoff analysis and best value decision are unclear and not fully documented. While avoiding protests is not always possible, we can mitigate their impact by properly justifying and documenting our best value source selection decisions.

The AQ point of contact for questions regarding this memo is Maj George Budz, SAF/AQCP, (703) 588-7072.

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