

## APPENDIX AA—FORMAL SOURCE SELECTION FOR MAJOR ACQUISITIONS

### PART 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

#### AA-100 Scope.

This appendix establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes implementing procedures for soliciting and evaluating offerors' proposals for major acquisitions conducted by Air Force contracting activities. This appendix implements Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 15.6[3], Source Selection, and fulfills [details] the responsibilities of the Air Force agency head for source selection contained in FAR 15.604 (a) and FAR 15.612 (b)[303(a)].

#### AA-101 Applicability.

(a) This appendix applies to the following competitive negotiated procurements:

- (1) PEO and DAC Programs and Other Contracting (other than Information Technology (IT)) contract actions estimated at \$500 million or more; and
- (2) Major Automated Information System (MAIS) and non-MAIS Information Technology (IT) acquisitions not integral to the weapon system estimated at \$120M or more.

#### NOTE:

- (1) Dollar amounts represent the estimated value of the source selection for the instant acquisition. (The dollar values are total values. See 5301.9006-4.)
- (2) Whenever the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition) (ASAF(A)) is the Source Selection Authority (SSA), the procedures of this appendix shall be followed, unless the ASAF(A) determines otherwise.
- (3) These procedures may be used for acquisitions below the stated dollar thresholds at the SSA's discretion.

(b) Lower level procedures implementing this appendix are authorized.

#### AA-102 Objective of the major source selection process.

The objective of the major source selection process is to select the source whose proposal has the highest degree of credibility and whose performance can be expected to best meet the Government's requirements at an affordable cost (price). The process must provide an impartial and equitable evaluation of the competitors' response to the solicitation, as well as performance and proposal risk assessments. The process should be accomplished with minimum complexity and maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The source selection decision must be compatible with program requirements and the stipulated evaluation criteria.

#### AA-103 Definitions.

"Acquisition Plan (AP)" means a comprehensive plan for fulfilling agency needs in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost (price). The acquisition plan contains the overall strategy for managing the acquisition. (See FAR Part 7.)

"Acquisition Strategy Panel (ASP)" means a group of functional experts who serve in an advisory capacity by reviewing and recommending acquisition strategies for a specific product or service.

"Advisors" means Government or non-Government personnel, designated by the SSA or the chairperson of the Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), who provide advice to the SSA, SSAC, or Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB).

"Assessment Criteria" means evaluation criteria which are used by evaluators in performing the technical evaluation by relating certain aspects of an offeror's proposal to specific evaluation criteria.

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"Best Value" ~~means the most advantageous offer, price and other factors considered, providing the best mix of utility, technical quality, business aspects, risks, and price for a given application.~~ **[See FAR 2.101 Definitions, as amended by FAC 97-02 (30 Sep 97)\*.]**

"Clarification" ~~means data, generally of an administrative nature, provided to resolve inadequate proposal content or contradictory statements in the proposal.~~ **[See FAR 15.306(a).]**

"Contract Definitization Team" means a group of Government personnel within the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) who are responsible for evaluating cost (price) proposals and negotiating the contract(s).

"Deficiency" ~~means, for the purpose of source selection actions, any part of an offeror's proposal which, when compared to a pertinent standard, fails to meet the Government's minimum level of compliance.~~

"Essential Characteristics or Baseline Requirements" ~~means qualitative/quantitative determinations that establish the minimum level of acceptability for each requirement or effort in the statement of objectives, statement of work, or performance work statement.~~ **[See FAR 15.301 Definitions.]**

"Evaluation Criteria" means the basis for measuring each offeror's ability, as expressed in its proposal, to meet the Government's needs as stated in the solicitation.

**["Evaluation Notice(EN)" means Source Selection Evaluation Team (SSET) inquiries to offerors to better understand offeror proposals, or to notify offerors about deficient aspects of their proposals. ENs issued prior to competitive range determination are for the purpose of enhancing Government understanding of proposals without revisions to those proposals. After the competitive range determination, ENs are also used to identify deficiencies and allow offerors to revise their proposals.]**

"Evaluation Standards" means establishing a uniform baseline against which each offeror's solution is compared to determine its value to the Government. They establish the level an offeror's proposal must meet in any area, factor, subfactor, or element to be judged acceptable ("green"). A standard may be quantitative, qualitative, or some combination of both. **[When possible, evaluation standards should be written as part of the evaluation factors and subfactors. If evaluation standards are written separately, they should be released to offerors.]**

"General Consideration" means an element of evaluation in the source selection that typically relates to proposed contractual terms and conditions, results of preaward surveys, and other surveys or reviews.

"Minimum Requirement" means the absolute lowest threshold acceptable in performance and capability.

"Oral Presentation" ~~means essentially one-way communication from the offerors to the Air Force, with written proposals still required.~~

"Oral Proposal" ~~means allowing two-way communication between the Government and the offeror. This may constitute discussions and take the place of a written proposal.~~ **[See FAR 15.102, Oral presentations.]**

"Performance Risk" means the assessment of an offeror's present and past work record to assess confidence in the offeror's ability to successfully perform as proposed.

"Performance Risk Assessment Group (PRAG)" means a group of experienced Government personnel that may be appointed by the SSAC chairperson to assess performance risk.

**\*[This and subsequent changes to FAR cites are through FAC 97-2 as noted.]**

"Proposal Analysis Report (PAR)" means the report prepared during source selection that fully documents the results of the SSEB technical evaluation, risk assessment, cost analysis, contract/business issues resolutions, and SSAC analysis, findings, and rationale.

"Proposal Risks" means the risks that are identified with an offeror's proposed approach as it relates to accomplishing the requirements of the solicitation.

"Single Acquisition Management Plan (SAMP)" means a concise, comprehensive program document which serves two functions: (1) it is the management plan program managers follow to successfully execute the acquisition of a requirement; (2) it is the supporting documentation which enables a program decision authority to reach a milestone decision.

"Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC)" means a group of senior Government personnel appointed by the SSA to provide counsel during the source selection process and to prepare for the SSA a comparative analysis of the evaluation results of the SSEB.

"Source Selection Authority (SSA)" means the official designated to direct the source selection process and make the source selection decision.

"Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB)" means a group of Government personnel representing the various functional and technical disciplines relevant to the acquisition that evaluates proposals and reports its findings to the SSAC.

"Source Selection Evaluation Team (SSET)" means a combined SSAC and SSEB alternative source selection organization that may be used at the discretion of the SSA. An SSET may not be used when Secretariat representatives are designated for membership on the SSAC.

"Source Selection Plan (SSP)" means a plan, approved by the SSA, that describes in detail how the source selection team (SSAC and SSEB, or SSET) is organized, how the proposals will be evaluated and analyzed, and how the source(s) will be selected.

"Specific Criteria" means a subset of evaluation criteria that relate to specific program characteristics. Specific criteria typically are divided into technical and/or management areas. These areas are divided into factors, which are further divided into subfactors and elements, as necessary, depending on the complexity of the factor being evaluated.

"Strength" means a significant, outstanding, or exceptional aspect of an offeror's proposal that exceeds the evaluation standard and provides a useful capability that will be included in the specification, or statement of objectives or statement of work, or is inherent in the offeror's process.

~~"Weakness" means an aspect of or omission from an offeror's proposal that contributes to a deficiency in meeting an evaluation standard or is otherwise a shortcoming of the proposal that has the potential to degrade contract performance.~~  
**[See FAR 15.301 Definitions.]**

#### **AA-104 Policies.**

The following policies apply:

- (a) It is Air Force policy to provide for full and open competition, or when full and open competition is not possible (see FAR Part 6), to obtain competition to the maximum extent practicable.
- (b) The SSA shall be presented with sufficient in-depth information on each of the competing offerors and their proposals to permit a reasoned, rational selection decision.
- (c) The SSAC will be staffed with senior Government personnel possessing broad experience in specific fields, such as systems development, systems engineering, manufacturing, operational requirements, finance, logistics, law, and contracting. For Major Programs, the chairperson and the SSAC member from each Air Force organization represented

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should be a general officer or a member of the Senior Executive Service. The primary SSAC members, who represent HQ USAF and the Secretariat, shall be afforded an opportunity to advise the SSAC chairperson or SSA before key formal source selection events and decisions. To accomplish this, the SSAC chairperson shall convene the SSAC and allow that body to review drafts of briefings and supporting background material. These key events include briefing the initial evaluation results, competitive range determinations, and final evaluation results.

(d) Only fully qualified personnel possessing the professional skills and knowledge required for an objective evaluation and assessment of offerors' proposals shall be selected to participate on the SSEB. The Program Manager is usually designated the SSEB chairperson.

(e) Early industry involvement, including the use of draft RFPs, is recommended to obtain industry comments. [(See FAR 15.201.)] The contracting officer may request industry feedback on such matters as contract type, performance, schedule, Contract Data Requirements Lists (CDRLs), specifications, statement of work, and other requirements that impact cost or restrict technical solutions. Equal access for all potential offerors must be afforded and a cut-off date will be established for receipt of comments to permit Government evaluation and incorporation of accepted changes into the formal solicitation. The personnel responsible for the requirement shall evaluate recommendations, make appropriate changes, and provide industry feedback on disposition of the recommendations.

(f) The rating system used in evaluating and analyzing proposals shall be described in the SSP. The rating system shall be structured to evaluate the offeror's proposal to meet the requirement as well as the strengths, weaknesses, and risks associated with each proposal. The rating system must, at a minimum, include written narratives at the factor level and subfactor level and descriptive color coding at the factor level. (See AA-304.) The objective of the rating system is to display an assessment of all important aspects of the offeror's proposal.

(g) Evaluation criteria include cost (price) criterion, specific criteria, and assessment criteria. These criteria should include those things considered important to the customer about the given program, such as reliability, maintainability, availability, environmental considerations, and technical adequacy. General considerations, combined with the use of the evaluation criteria, provide an integrated assessment that forms the basis for award. General considerations shall be ranked. Section M of the solicitation shall clearly state how general considerations will be integrated into the evaluation of offerors' proposals. Minimum requirements shall be included in the solicitation and evaluated.

(h) Performance risk is a major aspect in the source selection decision. When the integrated assessment of all aspects of the evaluation is accomplished, it is Air Force policy that the assessment of past performance (1/3) is of equal importance to either factor assessment (1/3) or proposal risk (1/3). This emphasis on past performance as a discriminator in source selection demonstrates the Air Force's commitment to award only to contractors who will carry through with what they promise in their proposals. It is believed that this will lead to improved contractor performance throughout the Air Force, prevent awards to habitually poor performers, and reduce the incidence of associated schedule slips and increased costs. Past performance shall not be used as a general consideration. It shall be separately rated for each area (see Attachment AA-4) and may, with the approval of the SSA, be treated as a general assessment (see Attachment AA-5).

(i) Except where award without discussions is planned in accordance with FAR 15.610[306], it is Air Force policy to conduct written or oral discussions with all offerors in the competitive range. These discussions should lead to submission of BAFOs [a final proposal revision], which will culminate in signed contractual documents representing the firm commitment of each such offeror.

~~(j) The use of auctioning techniques, such as indicating to an offeror a price which must be met to obtain further consideration, or informing an offeror that its price is not low in relation to that of another offeror, are strictly prohibited. This prohibition does not preclude discussing price or cost elements that are not clear or appear to be unreasonable or unjustified. Discussions may encourage offerors to put forward their most favorable price proposals. However, the price elements of any other offeror must not be discussed, disclosed, or compared. Technical leveling and technical transfusion through discussions with offerors are also strictly prohibited.~~

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(~~k~~**j**) All changes in price at ~~BAFO~~**[final proposal revision]** must be substantiated by offerors. The common cut-off date for conclusion of discussions and requests for a ~~BAFO~~**[final proposal revision]** must be scheduled to ensure that all competitors have an equal opportunity for discussion. **[(See FAR 15.307.)]**

(~~h~~**k**) The cognizant Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) and Defense Contract Management Command (DCMC) personnel should be invited to take part, as appropriate, in reviewing the solicitation and assisting in contract negotiation.

(~~m~~**l**) The techniques in this appendix shall not be used when award will be made to the Lowest Cost (Price)-Technically Acceptable offeror ~~because that acquisition method does not include an integrated assessment (see 5315.605-90).~~

**AA-105 Source Selection Authority (SSA).**

(a) Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of the Air Force, ASAF(A) is the SSA for those contract actions where this appendix applies (see AA-101). Additionally, the ASAF(A) may serve as SSA for any other acquisition deemed appropriate.

(b) The ASAF(A) will normally retain SSA on PEO and DAC Programs and Other Contracting actions meeting the thresholds under AA-101. See Tables A and B below for SSA delegations and Source Selection Plan (SSP) review levels. Redlegation can be made on either a case-by-case basis or by blanket delegation and shall be in writing.

(c) When the ASAF(A) authority has been delegated to a PEO or DAC, the SSA will inform ASAF(A) of significant events in the source selection. For all source selections meeting the thresholds of this appendix, the SSA will personally notify ASAF(A) before the announcement of the award, unless other instructions are provided.

**[Amended per contracting Policy Memo 97-C-16, dated 3 Nov 1997]**

**Table A - AFMC Source Selection Authority (SSA) Thresholds**

PEO and DAC Programs (non Information Technology)// Other Contracting

<u>Threshold</u>	<u>SSA (Delegable)</u>	<u>SSP Review</u>
\$5M to < \$50M	Single Manager*	BOCO/[/**]**
≥ \$50M to < \$500M	PEO or DAC//Center CC	SCCO
≥ \$500M	ASAF(A)	SSAC

MAIS Programs and non-MAIS Information Technology Acquisitions

<u>Threshold</u>	<u>SSA (Delegable)</u>	<u>SSP Review</u>
\$5M to < \$15/30M**	Single Manager*	BOCO/[/**]**
≥ \$15/30M** to < \$120M and non-MAIS	PEO or DAC//Center CC	SCCO
≥ \$120M or MAIS	PDASAF(A&M)	SSAC

\* Single Manager (SM) includes System Program Director, Product Group Manager (PGM), Materiel Group Manager (MGM), and **[Technology Director (TD)]**.

\*\* \$15/\$30M means \$15M or more in any FY or \$30M or more for all program years.

**[\*\*\* For other contracting, the first contracting official in the contract chain subordinate to the SCCO]**

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**Table B - Other MAJCOMs, FOAs, DRUs Source Selection Authority Thresholds**  
(Other Contracting)

<u>Threshold</u>	<u>SSA (Delegable)</u>	<u>SSP Review</u>
< \$500M Commanders*	Per Command Guidance	
≥ \$500M ASAF(A) SSAC		

MAIS Programs and non-MAIS Information Technology Acquisitions

<u>Threshold</u>	<u>SSA (Delegable)</u>	<u>SSP Review</u>
< \$120M Commanders* and non-MAIS	Per Command Guidance	
≥ \$120M or MAIS	PDASAF(A&M)	SSAC

\* Commanders of MAJCOMs, FOAs and DRUs

TABLE B NOTE: If an acquisition is designated a PEO Program, the PEO is the SSA for thresholds below ASAF(A) (delegable).

**AA-106 Organization.**

Formal source selection contemplates creation of a separate source selection organization and management chain of command (SSA, SSAC, and SSEB) for each acquisition. The organization must be structured to ensure continuity and to provide for active, ongoing involvement of appropriate contracting, technical, logistics, legal, cost, and other functional staff management expertise. The PRAG normally reports directly to the SSA or SSAC. See Attachment AA-1 for diagrams of typical source selection organizations. The source selection organization must be consistent with the organization described in the SSP.

**AA-107 Responsibilities and duties.**

A successful source selection requires teamwork. Members of the SSAC and SSEB from all disciplines must work together to ensure that the SSA is presented an accurate, integrated assessment of each offeror's proposal. Each member shall be given access to the full range of evaluation tools available, including the advice of personnel in other disciplines who serve as source selection advisors. The list of key responsibilities and duties below is not in chronological order. The sequence can vary widely depending upon the circumstances surrounding a given acquisition.

(a) The SSA is responsible for the proper and efficient conduct of the entire source selection process encompassing proposal solicitation, evaluation, selection, and contract award. The SSA has, subject to law and applicable regulations, full responsibility and authority to select source(s) for award and approve the award of the contract(s). The SSA shall:

- (1) Review and approve the SSP;
- (2) Appoint the SSAC chairperson, Secretariat and HQ USAF or joint service members of the SSAC, and advisors to the SSA;
- (3) Provide the SSAC and SSEB with guidance and instructions for conducting the source selection, as necessary;
- (4) Caution all involved in the source selection of the consequences of unauthorized disclosure of source selection information;
- (5) Approve the contracting officer's competitive range determination. This approval may be delegated to the SSAC chairperson, without further delegation, except that authority to exclude any offeror from the competitive range at any time during the source selection process is not delegable;

- (6) Make selection decisions and document the supporting rationale in the Source Selection Decision Document;
- ~~(7) Coordinate on any contracting officer decision to request more than one BAFO (see 5315.611).~~
- (b) The SSAC chairperson shall:
- (1) Ensure that personnel resources and time assigned to the source selection reflect the complexity of the program;
  - (2) Appoint members and advisors to the SSAC (other than Secretariat and HQ USAF or joint service members), subject to approval of the SSA;
  - (3) Ensure that all persons receiving source selection information are instructed to comply with applicable standards of conduct (see AA-403);
  - (4) Designate the chairperson and approve membership of the SSEB, PRAG, and advisors;
  - (5) Recommend approval of the SSP to the SSA;
  - (6) Ensure that members of the SSEB and SSAC are briefed on their responsibilities before any proposal is reviewed, including details on how the evaluation will be conducted.
  - (7) Review and approve issuance of ~~deficiency reports (DRs) and clarification requests (CRs)~~ **evaluation notices (ENs)** (see AA-306 and AA-307).
  - (8) Convene meetings of the SSAC to analyze the evaluation and findings of the SSEB and to develop the SSAC analysis for submission to the SSA;
  - (9) Cause the preparation of a Source Selection Decision Document for the SSA's signature, unless otherwise directed by the SSA;
  - (10) Ensure that all source selection team members execute the Source Selection Information Briefing Certificate (see Attachment AA-10); and,
  - (11) When award is made without discussions, review any deficiencies of the other offerors with the SSA.
- (c) The SSAC shall:
- (1) Review and approve the evaluation standards and rank order of criteria developed by personnel responsible for the requirement;
  - (2) Determine if it is desirable to weight the evaluation criteria;
  - (3) Review the contracting officer's competitive range determination and provide comments to the SSA;
  - (4) Review the PRAG's assessment of performance risk;
  - (5) Provide briefings and consultation at the request of the SSA;
  - (6) Offer a recommended source selection decision for the SSA's consideration, but only when requested by the SSA; and,
  - (7) Prepare the SSAC analysis and findings, which will be included in the Proposal Analysis Report for submission to the SSA.

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## (d) The SSEB shall:

- (1) Establish a contract definitization team as an integral part of the SSEB. The contracting officer or head of the contracting office will be appointed the head of the contract definitization team;
- (2) Conduct an in-depth review and evaluation of each proposal against the solicitation requirements, the approved evaluation criteria, and the evaluation standards;
- (3) Provide briefings and consultations concerning the evaluation as required by the SSA or SSAC;
- (4) Prepare and submit the Proposal Analysis Report to the SSAC for comparative analysis along with a summary report of the findings;
- (5) Prepare a draft of the SSAC analysis and findings, which is Section VI of the PAR, unless otherwise requested by the SSAC; and
- (6) Approve the formal contractor debriefing. (SSEB chairperson.)

## (e) The personnel responsible for the requirement shall:

- (1) Develop the acquisition strategy, initiate ASP proceedings, prepare the AP/SAMP, and prepare the SSP;
- (2) Propose the evaluation criteria for SSA approval as part of the SSP;
- (3) Propose the relative importance of the evaluation criteria in the SSP and develop the specific language to be included in Section M of the solicitation;
- (4) Propose evaluation standards;
- (5) Develop screening criteria for establishing a source list and include the screening criteria in the SSP;
- (6) Propose the SSP for approval by the SSA after it is coordinated with the SSAC;
- (7) Prepare and furnish to the SSEB an independent Government assessment of potential proposal risks before receipt of proposals; and
- (8) Ensure that all required business and contract clearances are obtained before the SSA briefing and the announcement of the selection decision.

## (f) The contracting officer shall:

- (1) Chair the contract definitization team and be responsible for all business aspects of the acquisition;
- (2) Prepare any required requests for delegation;
- (3) Prepare the RFP; obtain approval of the RFP, the AP/SAMP, and the Source Selection Plan; and then release the RFP;
- (4) Notify SAF/AQCS that the source selection is in process;
- (5) Ensure that training in source selection matters is provided to source selection team members.
- ~~(6) Serve as the sole point of contact between offerors and the Government during the source selection process;~~

- (7~~6~~) Ensure that all non-Governmental advisors are covered by an organizational conflict of interest (OCI) clause covering non-disclosure of contractor data in their respective contracts (see FAR Subpart 9.5). If the respective contracts do not contain this clause, the non-Governmental advisors shall not be permitted to participate in the source selection or have access to any source selection data, whatsoever;
- (8~~7~~) Issue any required RFP amendments;
- (9~~8~~) Receive proposals from offerors;
- (10~~9~~) Request preaward surveys and audits, as appropriate;
- (11~~10~~) Release letters to contractors who are outside competitive range concurrently with the release of ~~ENs~~CRs/DRs to contractors within the competitive range;
- (12~~11~~) Prepare model contracts;
- (13~~12~~) Receive responses to ~~CRs/DRs~~ENs];
- (14~~13~~) Chair any discussions with contractors and ensure that the team membership remains consistent for all discussions with offerors;
- (15~~14~~) Request, receive, and evaluate any revisions to proposals ~~and Best and Final Offers~~;
- (16~~15~~) Send DD-LA-(AR) 1279 report to SAF/LLP to announce contract award (see 5305.303-90);
- (17~~16~~) Award the contract to the successful offeror, distribute the contract, issue notice of contract award, and notify unsuccessful offerors;
- (18~~17~~) Conduct a postaward conference with awardee; and
- (19~~18~~) Promptly conduct a frank and open debriefing with any of the offerors at their request (see FAR ~~Subparts 15.40~~505 and 15.506).

(g) Headquarters MAJCOM, FOA, and DRU Chief of Contracting or Deputy shall:

- (1) Serve as primary advisor to the commander on source selection policy and participate as a member of ASPs and SSACs;
- (2) Assign appropriate contracting individuals to participate in acquisition strategy panels; and
- (3) Maintain a schedule of key SSAC meetings. Times, dates, and locations for these meetings should be planned and scheduled as far in advance as possible, giving due consideration to potential conflicts and potential consolidations with other significant source selection meetings. As a minimum, the key meetings shall include:
  - (i) The solicitation release authorization;
  - (ii) The presentation or briefing of the initial evaluation results including competitive range determinations; and
  - (iii) The presentation or briefing of the final evaluation results.

(h) SAF/AQCS shall:

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- (1) Serve as the Secretariat and HQ USAF action office for staffing all source selection actions, such as, delegations, SSAC chairperson nominations, and SSPs;
- (2) Coordinate scheduling of source selection meetings and control access to briefings chaired by ASAF(A); and
- (3) Manage the coordination and approval of all source selection documents and facilitate resolution of contractual issues to ensure timely processing and approval within the Secretariat.

**AA-108 Advisors.**

(a) Government and non-Government experts may be called upon to provide advisory assistance to the SSA, SSAC, or SSEB. However, non-Government advisors may not be used if a sufficient number of Government personnel having the training and capabilities necessary to perform the evaluation or analysis are readily available. Ensure that this determination is in accordance with any FAR implementing policy letters or supplements. Advisors may objectively review a proposal in a particular functional area and provide comments and recommendations to the Government's decision makers. They may not determine strengths and weaknesses, establish initial or final assessments of risks, or actually rate or rank offerors' proposals.

(b) The following additional restrictions are placed on non-Government advisors. Non-Government advisors shall not be:

- (1) Provided offeror proprietary, confidential, or privileged commercial or financial data unless prior written consent is obtained from the offeror;
- (2) Allowed to participate in oral presentations, oral proposals, or discussions unless the SSA or SSAC chairperson formally requests a deviation to this policy from the senior contracting official; and,
- (3) Allowed to participate in Government decision-making meetings, such as SSAC sessions or briefings, unless the SSA or SSAC chairperson requests that they be present during a particular portion of the meeting when they may be called upon to provide technical expertise.

(c) When non-Government advisors are used, the solicitation must include a provision advising offerors that non-Government contractor employees will have access to proposals (see FAR 15.413-2 ~~(f)~~[305(c)]). A provision may be included in the solicitation identifying the non-Government advisors and their employees and advising that any objection to disclosure:

- (1) Should be provided in writing prior to the date set for receipt of proposals; and
- (2) Shall include a detailed statement of the basis for the objection.

(d) An organizational conflict of interest (OCI) clause covering non-disclosure of contractor data shall be included in contracts where the contractor is to participate as a non-Government advisor to a source selection (see FAR Subpart 9.5).

**AA-109 Conflicts of interest.**

All persons involved in the source selection process, including non-Air Force personnel, will be instructed to inform the SSA if their participation in source selection activities might result in a real, apparent, possible, or potential conflict of interest. When so advised, the SSA will disqualify any person whose participation in the source selection process could raise questions regarding real, apparent, possible, or potential conflict of interest.

**AA-110 Solicitation and contract documents.**

Personnel responsible for the requirement will provide, upon request and in a timely manner, copies of the solicitation or other source selection documents to SAF/AQC.

**AA-111 Plant visits.**

Plant visits by the SSAC and SSEB may be beneficial during the source selection process. Plant visits by source selection personnel must be for a specific, clearly stated purpose, and be approved by the SSAC chairperson. The SSAC chairperson

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should ensure that all visits are made on an impartial basis (see FAR Subpart 42.4 regarding correspondence with contractors and visits to contractor facilities). Some examples of potentially beneficial plant visits are:

- (a) Presolicitation visits, as a preliminary step to the identification of prospective sources;
- (b) Key SSEB members' visits during the evaluation phase to develop knowledge for judging the potential for correction of deficiencies;
- (c) SSAC visits immediately before assembling all facts pertaining to the selection of the prospective contractor(s);
- (d) Manufacturing Methods/Production Capability Reviews and Production Readiness Reviews required to accurately define the contractor's proposed method of manufacture and capability to manufacture;
- (e) Software Development-Capability **[Evaluation]** Assessment (**SDC[E]A**). For programs where software development is critical, it may be appropriate to conduct an SDCA and associated plant visits; and
- (f) PRAG visits to verify contractor performance.

**AA-112 Interface with contractors.**

All personnel must be cautioned that only the contracting officer may commit the U.S. Government. Personnel involved in the source selection must avoid any situation or contact with any competing offeror that is not essential or would raise questions of impropriety. The objectivity of the source selection process may be impaired by contacts between Government personnel and prime/subcontractors involved in the competition during the period between the release of the solicitation and announcement of the source selection decision. Contacts with prospective contractors regarding the specific source selection must be avoided except for personnel directly participating in source selection discussions and contract negotiations.

**AA-113 Foreign Military Sales (FMS).**

When the Air Force conducts a major source selection for a Foreign Military Sales customer or in accordance with a cooperative agreement with a foreign government, the procedures of this appendix will be followed unless a deviation is approved in accordance with AA-114.

- (a) The FMS customer shall not participate in the formal source selection process. Subject to approval by the SSA, representatives of the customer country may be called upon by the SSEB or SSAC to clarify technical or management questions arising during evaluation of contractor proposals. The cost data or any part of a contractor's cost proposal shall not be released to any representative of the FMS customer. Representatives of the FMS customer shall not participate in contract negotiations.
- (b) Source selection decisions in international cooperative projects are the responsibility of the host nation in accordance with the terms of the cooperative agreement. When the Air Force represents the United States as host nation, this appendix should be followed. In accordance with the terms of the specific cooperative agreement, all participating nations may be represented on the SSEB and SSAC, but the SSA shall, after considering the advice of the SSEB and SSAC, make the source selection decision.

**AA-114 Deviations.**

Deviations to this appendix may be granted only by the ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M), unless this appendix is used at the discretion of the SSA (see AA-101, Note 3), in which case the SSA may approve deviations.

- (a) When the SSA is the ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M), a request for deviation may be included in the SSP and must specifically identify the deviation with adequate rationale.
- (b) Other requests for deviations shall be submitted in writing through appropriate channels to SAF/AQCS.

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**AA-115 Regulatory references.**

A list of key regulatory references pertaining to formal source selection is provided in Attachment AA-2.

**PART 2 - PRE-EVALUATION ACTIVITIES****AA-201 Introduction.**

This part explains the major steps in the source selection process that occur before receipt of initial proposals.

**AA-202 Acquisition strategy.**

(a) An Acquisition Strategy Panel (ASP) shall be held for all acquisitions subject to this appendix.

(b) Secretariat and HQ USAF representatives specified in established SAF/AQ guidance shall be invited to participate. Invitations should be received normally at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled ASP. SAF/AQCS shall also be advised of the time and place of these ASPs.

**AA-203 Delegation or Retention of Source Selection Authority.**

(a) Delegation of source selection authority shall be an agenda item at the ASP. The discussions regarding delegation should be reflected in the minutes of the ASP.

(b) If delegation of source selection authority is requested, the request shall be sent to the ASAF(A) or the PDASAF(A&M), as appropriate, through SAF/AQCS. The request shall be accompanied by the ASP briefing charts and minutes. The request should concisely identify the acquisition, request delegation, and identify tentative SSAC meeting dates for solicitation release authorization, initial proposal evaluation review, competitive range determination, and final decision briefing. As an alternative to these procedures, the request for SSA delegation may be submitted and approved with the AP/SAMP.

(1) If the delegation request is approved, the ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M) shall sign and forward the delegation decision memorandum to the SSA identifying Secretariat and HQ USAF individuals who will serve on the SSAC and identifying the SAF/AQCS action officer.

(2) If the delegation request is not approved and selection authority is retained within the Secretariat, SAF/AQC shall ask the applicable PEO, DAC, MAJCOM or AFMC Center commander to nominate an SSAC chairperson. The ASAF(A) reply memorandum will identify the SSA, appoint the SSAC chairperson, and identify Secretariat and HQ USAF individuals selected for SSAC membership and the SAF/AQCS action officer. Personnel responsible for the requirement shall forward a draft SSP through the SSAC chairperson to SAF/AQCS. SAF/AQCS will coordinate the SSP with primary SSAC members within the Secretariat and HQ USAF before forwarding it to the SSA.

(c) If a PEO, DAC, MAJCOM or AFMC Center commander believes that ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M) should retain source selection authority for an acquisition normally delegated in accordance with AA-105, the PEO, DAC, MAJCOM or AFMC Center commander shall forward a memorandum to ASAF(A) through SAF/AQCS with the ASP briefing charts and minutes. The memorandum will:

- (1) Justify recommending ASAF(A) retention;
- (2) Nominate a proposed SSAC chairperson;
- (3) Include a proposed source selection schedule; and
- (4) Request identification of Secretariat and HQ USAF SSAC members.

The memorandum should be sent as soon as possible after the ASP. The ASAF(A) will document the retention or delegation decision in a Decision Memorandum. If source selection authority is retained by the ASAF(A),

ASAF(A) will appoint the SSAC chairperson who will review, coordinate, and forward the SSP to SAF/AQCS for coordination of Secretariat and HQ USAF SSAC members prior to approval by the SSA.

**AA-204 Basis of award, evaluation criteria, and general considerations.**

(a) The basis for source selection and award of a contract must be limited to ~~criteria~~ **[factors and subfactors]** or considerations that are stated in the solicitation. **[All subfactors in Air Force source selections are significant as defined in FAR 15.304.]** Therefore, it is mandatory that the RFP clearly state all characteristics of the requirement that will be considered by the Air Force in making the source selection. Air Force source selection awards are based on an integrated assessment of each offeror's **[proposal using factors and subfactors which include:]** cost (price) criterion, specific criteria, assessment criteria **[(these criteria allow assessment of the quality of the offeror's proposal)]**, proposal risk, performance risk, and general considerations. These ~~criteria~~ **[factors and subfactors]** are stated in a structured manner in Section M of the RFP. This section serves as the "rules of engagement" for the source selection.

(b) Evaluation ~~criteria~~ **[factors and subfactors]** should be tailored to the characteristics of a particular program and should include only those significant aspects expected to have an impact on the ultimate selection decision. There must be a sufficient number of discriminators to effectively evaluate the offeror's proposal. The number of ~~criteria~~ **[factors and subfactors]** ~~is~~ **[are]** driven by the requirement. Care should be taken to ensure that arbitrary decisions are not made as to how many ~~criteria~~ **[factors and subfactors]** should be established for a procurement of a given estimated value or given technical application. Evaluation ~~criteria~~ **[factors and subfactors]** consist of three types: (1) cost (price) criterion, (2) specific criteria, and (3) assessment criteria. If a proposed criterion would not prevent award to an offeror with an unacceptable response, then it is not a discriminator and should not be used. See Attachments AA-4 and AA-5 for an example of the general format of the evaluation matrix.

(1) Cost (price) is a mandatory evaluation criterion that shall be evaluated as a factor in every AFFARS Appendix AA source selection to determine realism, completeness, and reasonableness. Examples of this factor might be instant contract cost (price) or life cycle cost. Do not use color or proposal risk ratings for cost.

(2) Specific criteria relate to program characteristics. The specific criteria are typically divided into technical and/or management evaluation areas. Examples of specific criteria might include areas such as, technical, supportability, manufacturing, operational utility, design approach, readiness and support, test and management. These areas are further subdivided into factors, subfactors, and, in some instances, elements. The level of subdivision depends on the complexity of the area being evaluated. Factors should be related to characteristics which are important to program success such as, reliability and maintainability, system effectiveness, producibility, supportability, and data management (including the Contract Data Requirements List). Any minimum requirements shall be included in the solicitation and evaluated. The SSP and Section M will state the level at which color/adjectival ratings will be assigned.

(3) Assessment criteria form the basis for evaluating each offeror's proposal in regards to the relevant evaluation criteria. Evaluators use assessment criteria in conjunction with evaluation standards to judge how well an offeror's proposal satisfies each of the relevant evaluation criteria.

(c) General considerations relate to proposed contractual terms and conditions, results of preaward surveys, and other surveys or reviews.

(d) Proposal risks are assessments associated with schedule and performance or technical aspects of the program.

(e) Performance risks relate to cost and specific criteria. Unless otherwise approved by the SSA, performance risk must be assessed for each area.

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**AA-205 Source Selection Plan (SSP).**

(a) The SSP is a key document in conducting the source selection. It should include applicable Program Management Directive (PMD) guidance or direction and contain the elements described below to ensure timely staff review and SSA approval. Personnel responsible for the requirement will prepare a written SSP for all source selections conducted under this regulation.

(1) The SSP must be submitted sufficiently in advance of the planned acquisition action to permit review and approval by the SSA and early establishment of the SSAC or SSEB. If ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M) is the source selection authority, the SSP shall be sent to SAF/AQCS for coordination and approval by ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M). The SSAC Chairperson will review and coordinate on the SSP prior to forwarding to SAF/AQCS. See table in AA-105.

(2) When changes in acquisition strategy require a revision to the SSP, personnel responsible for the requirement will send the proposed revision through source selection channels to the SSA.

(b) The plan shall include the following sections (support may be provided by documents referenced in and attached to the SSP):

(1) **INTRODUCTION.** Describe briefly what is being acquired.

(2) **SOURCE SELECTION ORGANIZATION.** Describe the proposed SSA, SSAC, SSEB (or SSET), and PRAG organizations. List recommended key members by name, by position title, or by functional area. The plan must identify other Government organizations that will be represented on the SSAC and SSEB.

(3) **PROPOSED PRESOLICITATION ACTIVITIES.** Describe the activities leading up to release of the solicitation, including market survey, draft solicitations, synopsis, and SSAC solicitation release meeting. For the market survey, discuss how it was used to achieve competition, including a discussion of screening criteria, if applicable.

(4) **EVALUATION PROCEDURES.** Specify the evaluation and rating methodology. Outline the process to be followed in formulating the Government's best estimate of the total cost. Items that are considered to have sufficient cost impact to warrant special consideration will be separately identified. Items which represent nonquantifiable cost risks should be identified. Plans for developing Independent Cost Analysis (ICA), Most Probable Cost (MPC), and Life Cycle Cost (LCC) estimates will be presented. The cost criterion will not be rated but must be ranked in order of importance. The methodology to be followed for evaluating offerors' cost proposals must be described in the SSP. NOTE: When the plan adopts something verbatim from this regulation, simply cite the regulation instead of quoting verbatim in the plan. This includes the color coding and risk definitions.

(5) **EVALUATION CRITERIA.** Describe the cost (price) criterion and specific criteria including factors and, when appropriate, subfactors and elements. Describe the assessment criteria and how they apply to the evaluation. The relative importance of the cost (price) criterion, specific criteria, and general considerations will be stated. Assessment criteria must also be ranked in relative order of importance or identified as of equal importance. Describe general considerations and how they relate to the evaluation of the offeror's proposal.

(6) **ACQUISITION STRATEGY.** The SSP will include a summary of the acquisition strategy, including type of contract(s) proposed, the incentives contemplated, milestone demonstrations intended, special contract clauses, etc. The SSP acquisition strategy must reflect the strategy developed in the AP/SAMP.

(7) **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.** Identify and establish the schedule for significant source selection activities in sufficient detail to allow the reviewing authorities to assess the practicality of the schedule. The schedule of events in Attachment AA-3 may be used as a guide.

(8) NON-GOVERNMENT ADVISORS. The source selection plan shall address the use of non-Government advisors (see FAR 15.413-2 (f) ~~[305(c)]~~ and AA-108).

(c) The SSP shall be approved by the SSA before issuing the solicitation.

(d) Only include tailored information; otherwise, cite the appropriate paragraph of this regulation.

**AA-206 Evaluation standards.**

(a) The SSEB conducts its evaluation by measuring each proposal against objective standards established at the lowest level of subdivision. The SSEB shall *not* compare proposals against each other.

(b) A standard establishes a baseline to measure how well an offeror's proposal satisfies the evaluation criteria. It establishes the level an offeror's proposal must meet in any factor, subfactor, or element to be judged acceptable ("green") as stated in AA-304. Standards shall not be used to create a new or unstated requirement. A standard may be either quantitative, qualitative, or both, depending on the criteria it addresses (see Attachment AA-6 for examples).

(c) As a matter of practice, standards should be established and documented prior to the release of the solicitation and must be approved by the SSA before beginning the evaluation of proposals. They shall not be changed once an offeror's proposal is opened. The release of standards is situational; it may or may not be appropriate to a given acquisition. However, release of standards is encouraged to ensure more open communication with industry and a better understanding of the Government's approach to making a best value source selection decision.

(d) The SSA is responsible for approving the inclusion of the standards in the solicitation when it is deemed appropriate or beneficial to do so.

**AA-207 Solicitation.**

The contracting officer is responsible for preparing the solicitation. Personnel responsible for the requirement are responsible for preparing key portions of the RFP, such as the statement of objectives or statement of work and the data requirements. The solicitation must accurately convey to offerors the technical, schedule, cost, and contractual requirements of the acquisition. In addition:

(1) The evaluation criteria and general considerations must be stated in the solicitation as they appear in the approved SSP. The solicitation shall indicate the relative importance among cost (price) criterion, specific evaluation criteria (including areas, factors, and any significant subfactors), and general considerations. Additionally, the solicitation shall state whether all evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are significantly more important than cost or price, approximately equal to cost or price, or significantly less important than cost or price. If requirements or conditions significantly change so as to negate or modify the evaluation criteria originally established in the solicitation, each offeror shall be informed by a solicitation amendment of the adjusted criteria and basis for award. Offerors shall then be given a reasonable time to revise their proposals. After proposals have been received, a change in evaluation criteria or requirements may require resolicitation (see FAR 15.606 ~~[206(e)]~~).

(2) The solicitation should contain a matrix which correlates the evaluation criteria with the information to be submitted in the proposal. The offerors should prepare and submit their proposal in sections aligned with and cross-indexed to the evaluation criteria to facilitate Government review and evaluation. Offerors should be asked to identify technical, cost, schedule, manufacturing, and proposal risks associated with their proposals, together with their approaches for resolving or avoiding the identified risks.

(3) The solicitation shall include a notice stating that unrealistically low proposed costs or prices, initially or subsequently, may be grounds for eliminating a proposal from competition either on the basis that the offeror does not understand the requirement or the offeror has made an unrealistic proposal. Offerors should be advised that

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offers should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate their cost (price) credibility and that offerors' estimates that are unexplainably low may cause the offer to be eliminated from the competition (subject to the requirements in FAR 15.608[305] and FAR 15.649[306]).

(4) An executive summary should accompany the solicitation to briefly describe and highlight the salient aspects of the solicitation. The executive summary shall not contain any new information or requirements not already discussed in the solicitation.

**AA-208 Notice of source selection action.**

When the solicitation is released, the SSAC chairperson shall ensure that a notice of source selection action in progress is forwarded to all appropriate Air Force Commands, SAF/AQCS, and the potential offerors. The notification will identify the system, subsystem, or project involved; the anticipated period of the source selection activities; and include **[a]** statements to the effect that:

- ~~(1) Contacts regarding, or briefings concerning, the program by participating offerors are not allowed;~~
- ~~(2) The contracting officer is the only person authorized to contact offerors; and~~
- ~~(3) T[**h**e SSA is the only person with authority to release information regarding an ongoing source selection.~~

**PART 3 - PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SOURCE SELECTION DECISION****AA-301 General.**

This part explains the major steps in the source selection process from receipt of initial proposals through the source selection decision including discussions with offerors. Proposals shall be evaluated in a fair, comprehensive, and impartial manner.

**AA-302 Offerors' oral presentations.**

- (a) The SSAC should consider having oral presentations, if determined appropriate.
- (b) If oral presentations are deemed appropriate:
  - (1) Presentations should be conducted ~~before commencement of evaluation of proposals~~ **in accordance with FAR 15.102**;
  - (2) Each offeror shall be given an opportunity to make an oral presentation so that no offeror will have a competitive advantage;
  - (3) To ensure objectivity during the evaluation process, all Government participants in the evaluation must attend either all or none of the oral presentations; and
  - (4) The SSEB chairperson shall ensure that there is a documented record of each oral presentation included in the source selection file.

**AA-303 Technical evaluation.**

The SSEB chairperson shall ensure that all elements of the evaluation are coordinated and that the evaluation report on each offeror is logical and consistent.

- (a) The SSEB accomplishes a technical evaluation of each of the initial offers using the assessment criteria to analyze each proposal with respect to the evaluation criteria in Section M of the RFP.
- (b) Evaluators shall indicate the value of each proposal in relation to the evaluation standards which were established before receipt of proposals. The SSEB shall *not* compare proposals against each other.

(c) Evaluators must understand the requirement, the solicitation, the evaluation criteria, and the evaluation standards. Evaluators are encouraged to engage in discussions with advisors or other SSEB members when it is necessary to verify certain aspects of proposals under their review.

(d) The technical evaluation results in ~~four distinct~~ **[the following]** products that are included in the Proposal Analysis Report (PAR):

- (1) Proposal ratings;
- (2) Proposal risk assessments;
- (3) Performance risk assessments;
- (4) Narrative assessments (which identify strengths and weaknesses and support ratings and proposal risk assessments); and
- (5) Recommended ~~deficiency reports and clarification requests~~ **[evaluation notices (ENs)]**.

**AA-304 Use of rating techniques.**

(a) After assessing the offerors’ data, the evaluator shall apply the rating system prescribed by the SSP and rate each proposal in relation to the evaluation standards.

(b) Normally, color ratings are used. When used, color ratings are mandatory at the factor and subfactor level. Colors may also be used at the element level, although symbols may be used as an alternative at these lower levels. The color rating depicts how well each offeror meets the evaluation standards. Color ratings are not summarized above the factor level, i.e., factor color ratings shall not be rolled up to the area level. To provide for a standard color scheme, the spectrum below shall be used (see Attachments AA-4 and AA-5 for examples). Ratings must be accompanied by a consistent narrative assessment (inclusive of strengths and weaknesses) of the basis for the rating. Deviations from these definitions can only be obtained through SAF/AQCP.

<u>Color</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Blue	Exceptional	Exceeds specified performance or capability in a beneficial way to the Air Force and has no significant weakness.
Green	Acceptable	Meets evaluation standards and any weaknesses are readily corrected.
Yellow	Marginal	Fails to meet evaluation standards; however, any significant deficiencies are correctable.
Red	Unacceptable	Fails to meet a minimum requirement of the RFP and the deficiency is uncorrectable without a major revision of the proposal.

The following ratings shall be used when evaluating those segments of a proposal that reflect minimum mandatory requirements:

<u>Color</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Green	Acceptable	Passes (or meets) minimum mandatory requirements.
Red	Unacceptable	Fails to meet minimum mandatory requirements.

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- (c) Use of numerical weights is discouraged because it implies that the technical team can differentiate between small differences in technical merit. Such determinations may be extremely difficult to support. Therefore, numerical weighting of evaluation criterion is not recommended. However, if the SSAC decides to use numerical weights, they may be disclosed in the RFP, at the discretion of the contracting officer.
- (d) If an offeror's proposal is evaluated as unacceptable at any level of the evaluation criteria, this fact must be included in the rating and narrative assessment at that level and each higher evaluation criteria level. Therefore, a "red" or unacceptable rating at any level must be carried to the highest rated level.
- (e) Symbols may be used to indicate proposal ratings at the element level. For example, a plus (+) sign may be used to indicate that the offeror has exceeded the standard; a check (✓) to indicate that the offeror has met the standard; and a minus (-) sign to indicate that the standard has not been met for the element evaluated.
- (f) The following subjects are not color rated (although they still are considered by the SSAC as part of the integrated assessment):
- (1) Financial capability, Production Readiness Reviews, and preaward surveys;
  - (2) Cost (price); and
  - (3) Risk (proposal and performance).
- (g) Proposals are normally rated twice:
- (1) Upon completion of the evaluation of the initial proposal; and
  - (2) At the end of discussions after responses to ENs BAFOs are received, if discussions are held.

NOTE: Both ratings will be maintained and submitted to the SSAC.

(h) When displayed graphically in briefings or reports, changes in the initial color rating shall be displayed by showing the new color and superimposing one or more arrows in the color block. The number and direction of the arrows used in each block on the chart indicates the extent and direction of change, (i.e., one arrow upward indicates an improvement of one color rating). Any changes from the original proposal should be identified in the discussion of strengths, weaknesses, and risk, and analyzed for the SSA in the SSEB and the SSA briefing.

#### AA-305 Assessment of risk.

(a) There are two types of risk assessment. Proposal risk relates to the identification and assessment of the risks associated with an offeror's proposed approach as it relates to accomplishing the requirements of the solicitation. Performance risk relates to the assessment of an offeror's present and past work record to assess confidence in the offeror's ability to successfully perform as proposed. Proposal risk assessments will always be reflected in the evaluation matrix (see Attachments AA-4 and AA-5). Proposal risk ratings shall not be rolled up to the area level. Performance risk will be reflected in the evaluation matrix (see Attachments AA-4 and AA-5). Performance risk will be evaluated equally with factors assessments and proposal risk (i.e., conceptually, 1/3, 1/3, 1/3).

(1) Use the following definitions when assessing proposal risks:

(i) HIGH (H) — Likely to cause significant serious disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance even with special contractor emphasis and close Government monitoring;

(ii) MODERATE (M) — Can potentially cause some disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance. However, special contractor emphasis and close Government monitoring will probably be able to overcome difficulties; and

(iii) LOW (L) — Has little potential to cause disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance. Normal contractor effort and normal Government monitoring will probably be able to overcome difficulties.

(2) Use the following definitions when assessing performance risk:

(i) HIGH (H) — Significant doubt exists, based on the offeror's performance record, that the offeror can perform the proposed effort;

(ii) MODERATE (M) — Some doubt exists, based on the offeror's performance record, that the offeror can perform the proposed effort;

(iii) LOW (L) — Little doubt exists, based on the offeror's performance record, that the offeror can perform the proposed effort; and

(iv) NOT APPLICABLE — No significant performance record is identifiable.

(b) Each proposal and performance risk assessment will consider the number and severity of problems, the effectiveness of corrective actions taken, and the overall work record. Consider also the offeror's demonstrated ability to effectively identify and take actions to abate program risks. The assessment of performance risk is not intended to be a simple arithmetic function of an offeror's performance on a list of contracts. The PRAG should place the greatest consideration on the information deemed most relevant and significant. In the cost area, more consideration should be given to efforts for similar end items, efforts during a similar phase of the acquisition cycle, and efforts with similar contract types.

(c) As a part of their proposal, offerors may be required to submit a proposal risk analysis which identifies proposal risk areas and the recommended approaches to minimize the impact of those risks on the overall success of the program.

(d) Proposal risks associated with cost, schedule, and performance or technical aspects of the program must be assessed. Risks may be inherent in a proposed approach by virtue of its relationship to the state-of-the-art. Risks may occur as a result of a particular technical approach, manufacturing plan, the selection of certain materials, processes, equipment, etc., or as a result of the cost, schedule, and economic impacts associated with these approaches. Risk may also occur from the impact that these will have on the offeror's ability to perform in view of its technical approach. The prime's proposed subcontract arrangements may also impact proposal risk. For instance, a proposed fixed-price subcontract for a high technical risk effort, or one with an unrealistic delivery schedule, can be expected to impact the overall effort and should be assessed in the proposal risk for that area or factor.

(e) In evaluating proposal risks, the evaluators must consider the assessment prepared by personnel responsible for the requirement and the offeror's assessment and make an independent judgment of the probability of success, the impact of failure, and the alternatives available to meet the requirements.

(f) Proposal risk assessments shall be discussed in evaluation narratives along with strengths and weaknesses and shall be depicted in briefings with the color ratings for each factor, subfactor, or element other than cost (price) as specified in Section M of the RFP. A proposal risk assessment rating and discussion is mandatory for each subfactor at the subfactor summary level.

(g) The performance risk assessment will focus on cost and specific criteria. Performance risk shall also be separately discussed in evaluation narratives in addition to strengths and weaknesses and depicted in briefings.

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- (h) The risk assessment and color rating assigned to any factor or subfactor are independent of each other. Any risk assessment rating may be used with any color rating to reflect evaluation results.
- (i) It is the responsibility of the specific criteria evaluation teams to ensure that the cost team is informed of the identified proposal risks and the potential cost impact.

**AA-306 Deficiency reports (DRs). [Exchanges with offerors.]**

~~(a) During the initial evaluation of proposals, the SSEB must record separately and in addition to the narrative analysis, the deficiencies found in each offeror's proposal. It is important that deficiency reports be prepared at the time the deficiency is discovered. Late preparation often results in poorly substantiated reports. It is important that the evaluator document the effect the uncorrected deficiency would have on the program (see Attachment AA-7). The deficiency report will be provided to the contract definitization team which will, in turn, provide the offeror with the opportunity to amend its proposal to correct the deficiency. The release of deficiency reports (which constitutes discussions) will not begin until after the initial competitive range is determined and approval to release the reports is received from the SSAC chairperson. Award shall not be made without discussion until the SSAC chairperson has reviewed the deficiencies in each offeror's proposal.~~

~~(b) Examples of deficiency reports are:~~

~~(1) A proposed approach which poses an unacceptable risk;~~

~~(2) An omission of data which makes it impossible to assess compliance with the standard for that requirement; or~~

~~(3) An approach taken by an offeror in the design of its system which is expected to yield undesirable performance.~~

~~(c) Identified deficiencies shall be derived only from the evaluation of each offeror's proposal against evaluation standards, and then only when the proposal fails to meet the Government's specified minimum level of compliance. Deficiencies must not be derived from a comparative evaluation of the relative strengths and weaknesses of competing offerors' proposals.~~

~~(d) The offeror's response to the deficiency report is as important as the original proposal. The contract definitization team must transmit each offeror's response to the evaluation team for a technical analysis.~~

~~(e) Each deficiency report, which is a part of the overall PAR, must address significant changes which have an impact on the original proposal. All DRs will be addressed in the PAR.~~

~~(f) Deficiency reports may serve as a guide for debriefing offerors after contract award.~~

**AA-307 Clarification requests (CRs).**

(a) Evaluators must identify those aspects of the proposal which require clarification. If data provided in the proposal is inadequate for evaluation or contradictory statements are found, a clarification request should be issued. Two categories of clarification requests exist:

(1) Significant clarification requests (SCRs) will specifically identify the aspect of the offeror's proposal for which clarification is required and require that discussions with offerors be opened. Whenever performance risk assessment results in a possible rating of moderate or high, SCRs should be developed. All clarification requests (see Attachment AA-7) are sent to the contract definitization team and submitted to the offerors in the same way as deficiency reports. As with DRs, the SSAC chairperson will review and approve all CRs before providing them to offerors and before any decision is made to award without discussions; and

~~(2) Minor clarification requests (MCRs) are for the purpose of eliminating minor irregularities, informalities, or apparent clerical mistakes. MCRs do not give the offeror an opportunity to revise or modify its proposal and do not constitute discussions. Subject to the concurrence of legal counsel, MCRs may be sent prior to the initial competitive range determination.~~

~~(b) Release of any SCRs to an offeror constitutes discussions and shall not be sent before the initial competitive range determination.~~

**[(a) Exchanges with offerors after receipt of proposals are conducted in accordance with FAR 15.306. Evaluation Notices (ENs) may be issued for purposes of clarification, to enhance government understanding of offeror proposals, and to notify offerors of deficiencies or weaknesses in their proposals. When such exchanges occur prior to establishment of competitive range, offerors shall not be permitted to revise their proposals in response to the ENs; however, corrections of a minor nature may be permitted and offerors may be given the opportunity to clarify certain aspects of their proposals if the government intends to award without discussions.]**

**(b) Subsequent to the competitive range determination, offerors determined to be in competitive range may revise their proposals as necessary in response to ENs, to correct deficiencies, clarify the government's understanding of their proposals, and enhance their proposals in accordance with FAR 15.306(d). These exchanges with offerors after establishment of competitive range constitute discussions.]**

**AA-308[7] Narrative assessments.**

(a) Preparing the results of the evaluation in narrative form is an important aspect of the evaluation process. In preparing the written narrative, the evaluator should be aware that it will be the principle means available to the SSAC to perform a comparative analysis of the offers.

(b) The evaluator must indicate in the narrative, as a minimum: what is offered, whether it meets or fails to meet the evaluation standard, any strengths or weaknesses, the impact of any deficiencies, what can be done to remedy each deficiency, and a risk assessment of the offeror's proposal approach and ability to perform. Clarity and brevity are the keys to successfully prepared narratives.

**AA-309[8] Cost (price) evaluation.**

(a) The purpose of cost (price) evaluation is to determine whether an offeror's proposed costs are realistic and complete in relation to the solicitation and the technical and management proposals and to provide an assessment of the reasonableness of the proposed price.

(1) Realism is evaluated by assessing the overall costs in an offeror's proposal to determine if they:

- (i) Are realistic for the work to be performed;
- (ii) Reflect a clear understanding of the requirements; and
- (iii) Are consistent with the various elements of the offeror's technical proposal.

(2) Completeness is evaluated by assessing the level of detail the offeror provided in cost information for all RFP requirements in the statement of objectives or statement of work and assessing the traceability of estimates; and,

(3) Reasonableness of an offeror's proposal is evaluated through cost or price analysis techniques as described in FAR Subpart 15.6 and FAR Subpart 15.8 **[15.305(a)(1) and (4).]**

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~~(b) In order to avoid influencing their judgment, the bottom line of the competing offerors' cost (price) proposals shall not be made available to technical evaluators. During the evaluation, cost (price) evaluators, however, should discuss the details of technical proposals with the technical evaluators (and may generally discuss specific cost elements/areas) to aid in their evaluation of costs associated with labor categories and hours, materials, manufacturing processes, and other elements of cost (price) as appropriate. Labor hour and material breakouts may be included in technical volumes of the proposal to aid in this process. Cost (price) evaluators should also use the DCAA audit report and the contract administration office field price analysis report. However, after the BAFO and the technical evaluation are complete, it is acceptable to release the overall cost (price) information to the technical evaluators.~~

~~(e**[b]**)~~ In addition to cost (price) analysis, further measurement of cost (price) reasonableness and realism will be made. This measurement will be accomplished by comparing the Most Probable Cost (MPC) estimate prepared by personnel responsible for the requirement and, if performed, the Independent Cost Analysis (ICA), with the proposed cost (price) after considering the risk associated with the technical approach and disposition of deficiencies.

~~(d**[c]**)~~ Evaluation of the cost (price) realism of each proposal will be made without regard to any proposed ceiling on the Government's obligation.

~~(e**[d]**)~~ Consideration must be given to variations in amount of Government-furnished property (GFP) requested or the use of Government-owned facilities and tooling and all other disparities before the offeror's proposal can be equitably evaluated. The evaluated costs shall be adjusted to account for these variations.

~~(f**[e]**)~~ The cost team will initiate and maintain a cost baseline for each proposal to facilitate an understanding of the changes leading to the final cost (price). A summary of this baseline and all changes through BAFO **[final proposal revision]** shall be included in the PAR.

~~(g**[f]**)~~ Following completion of the cost (price) evaluation, the SSAC will be provided with the cost team's findings as to the reasonableness, completeness, and realism of each offeror's proposal. If a proposal is determined to be unrealistic, incomplete, or unreasonable, the reasons for this conclusion must be stated. When Most Probable Cost (MPC) or similar techniques are used, the SSAC will also be given visibility into the build-up of the evaluated Government amount for each proposal through BAFO **[final proposal revision]**.

#### **AA-310[09] Coordination of findings within the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB).**

After completing the evaluation, each evaluator must coordinate the findings with other team members to ensure consensus within the team. After accomplishing the intra-team coordination, team leaders must coordinate their findings with other team leaders. The coordination of findings between the various factor teams and the cost team is important. Additionally, the PRAG must identify and coordinate its findings with the SSEB to ensure a logical presentation to the SSAC and SSA.

#### **AA-314[0] Determination of competitive range.**

(a) When written or oral discussions are conducted, they must be conducted with all responsible offerors who submit proposals within the competitive range. The determination as to which proposals are not in the competitive range, and the exclusion of offerors either before or as a result of written or oral discussions, will be made by the contracting officer, subject to approval by the SSA.

(b) After evaluation of all proposals received, the competitive range must be determined on the basis of cost (price) technical, and other salient factors including proposal deficiencies and their potential for correction. Before including or excluding a proposal from within the competitive range, the possibility of its selection for award should be assessed. The objective is not to eliminate proposals from the competitive range, but to ~~facilitate competition by conducting written and oral discussions with those offerors who have a reasonable chance of being selected for an award~~ **establish a competitive range comprised of all the most highly rated proposals unless the range is further reduced for purposes of efficiency**.

(c) The determination of competitive range is based on informed judgment and is complex in nature. All such decisions must be completely and adequately documented for the record. A proposal may be determined outside the competitive range if:

(1) It does not reasonably address the essential requirements of the solicitation;

(2) A substantial technical drawback is apparent in the proposal and sufficient correction or improvement to consider the proposal further would require virtually an entirely new technical proposal; or

(3) The proposal contains major technical or business deficiencies or omissions or out-of-line costs which initial or continuing discussions with the offeror could not reasonably be expected to cure. Before eliminating an offeror from the competitive range based on unrealistic costs or prices, it will be necessary, to the extent possible, and without discussions with the offeror, to assess the reason for the out-of-line costs or prices. For example, the costs might be attributable to a unique design approach, a technical breakthrough, or an accelerated delivery. These may be legitimate reasons for the apparent out-of-line costs or prices.

**[(4) It is above the greatest number permitting an efficient competition among the most highly rated proposals.]**

(d) Multiple competitive range determinations before ~~BAFO~~**[final proposal revisions]** are acceptable. For example, a second competitive range determination may be appropriate after responses to ~~clarification requests and deficiency reports~~**[evaluation notices]** have been received.

(e) Whenever the chairperson of the SSEB, SSAC, or SSET concludes that a foreign offeror or domestic offeror with major foreign subcontractor(s) may be removed from the competitive range, the SSA should be notified immediately. The SSA should consider whether a SAF/IA representative should be appointed as an advisor. If a SAF/IA advisor is appointed, they shall participate in presentations and briefings supporting the exclusion/inclusion of such offerors from the competitive range through contract award.

(f) Exclusion of an offeror from the competitive range at any time during the source selection process must be approved by the SSA (nondelegable). A meeting of the SSAC shall be convened to consider any such exclusion before SSA approval.

(g) Offerors whose proposals are determined to be outside the competitive range and with whom initial or continuing discussions are not to be conducted must be notified promptly in accordance with FAR 15.609**[503]**.

**AA-312**[1]** Conducting written or oral discussions.**

(a) Written or oral discussions with offerors shall be led *only* by members of the contract definitization team with other SSEB members' support. The team will negotiate definitive contracts with all offerors determined to be within the competitive range. The team is the only point of contact between the SSEB and the offerors. **[(see FAR 15.306(d))]**.

(b) All offerors determined to be in the competitive range shall be advised of any deficiencies in their proposals or portions of their proposals that require clarification and be given a reasonable opportunity to correct or resolve the deficiencies and to provide clarifications. Any deficiency or weakness in an offeror's proposal which drives a color rating less than acceptable (i.e., "green") must be discussed with the offeror if discussions have been opened **[(see FAR 15.306(d)(3))]**. Additionally, it is strongly advised that any weakness documented in the narrative description of strengths and weaknesses be discussed with the offeror if discussions have been opened prior to the decision briefing. This will ensure that offerors who request debriefings after contract award and are provided with their respective color ratings, risk assessments, and narrative descriptions have been given adequate opportunity to address their weaknesses during discussions. Offerors may submit cost (price), technical, or other proposal revisions as a result of the discussions.

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- (c) Discussions with each offeror must be confined exclusively to that offeror's proposal. Discussions must be conducted in a way that scrupulously avoids disclosure of the relative strengths and weaknesses of competing offerors, technical information or ideas, or cost (price) data from any other offeror's proposal.
- (d) At the conclusion of written or oral discussions, a final common cut-off date which allows a reasonable opportunity for submission of ~~best and final offers~~ **[final proposal revisions]** must be established and all remaining participants notified in writing. The notifications shall:
- (1) State that discussions have been concluded and specify the date, time, and location for receipt of ~~BAFOs~~ **[final proposal revisions]**;
  - (2) Identify to each offeror any remaining deficiencies in its proposal;
  - (3) Advise the offerors that any ~~BAFO~~ **[final proposal revision]** received after the final cut-off date will be considered a late modification in accordance with FAR 15.412[208];
  - (4) Advise the offerors that if a ~~BAFO~~ **[final proposal revision]** is not received prior to the common cut-off date for an offeror, that offeror's current proposal, reflecting any clarifications or revisions to date, will be evaluated as its ~~best and final offer~~ **[final proposal revision]**; and,
  - (5) Caution the offerors against buying-in and submitting unsupported changes to their prior offers.

~~(e) Contracting officers shall not call for BAFOs more than once unless fully justified and approved in accordance with DFARS 215.611.~~

~~(f)~~ All proposal revisions and information provided by the offerors during the conduct of discussions and received prior to the common cut-off will be considered in the final source selection decision.

**AA-313[2] The Proposal Analysis Report and presentation.**

- (a) Upon completion of the evaluation of ~~BAFOs~~ **[final proposal revisions]**, the SSEB chairperson shall have both a written report (see Section I - IV of Attachment AA-8) and a viewgraph/oral presentation prepared which shall be presented to the SSAC for the purpose of reviewing the significant findings and assessments of the SSEB and PRAG through final discussions and ~~BAFO~~ **[final proposal revisions]**. Upon completion of the SSAC evaluation of the SSEB report and presentation, they shall both be supplemented and/or amended to incorporate the comparative analysis and/or conclusions and findings of the SSAC. Note: While this has almost always been the case for the presentation, this change in procedures eliminates the separate SSEB and SSAC reports and results in a single PAR document.
- (b) The written evaluation report shall be in the format established in Attachment AA-8, and the oral presentation shall, at a minimum, include the following:
- (1) A narrative assessment of the technical evaluation. Narrative assessments shall be provided at the factor summary level or other levels as necessary. Each factor assessment must be precise and identify the color rating and proposal risk. It will highlight the significant strengths and weaknesses of each evaluated aspect of the proposal. (See Attachments AA-4 and AA-5 for examples of graphically displaying matrix information.);
  - (2) An analysis of the offeror's cost (price);
  - (3) Results of evaluating contractual considerations and any other general considerations that were evaluated by the SSEB;

- (4) Performance risk assessment for each area unless performance risk is rated as a general assessment; and
  - (5) An overall independent comparative analysis and findings of one proposal to another (SSAC responsibility).
- (c) The objective of Section III of the Proposal Analysis Report (PAR) is to present a summary of the evaluation of each proposal against solicitation requirements based on established evaluation criteria and evaluation standards.
- (d) The SSAC will be expected to review and analyze the report at the time of the final evaluation briefing and provide any additional inputs to the SSA. The section shall contain the SSAC's independent comparative analysis and findings and any exceptions taken to the SSEB's report. The SSAC may take exception to any part of the report, including, but not limited to, color codes for factors, risk analyses, rationale, strengths and weaknesses, or evaluated cost.
- (e) Supporting documentation for the PAR shall be organized in accordance with MAJCOM procedures. An audit trail from the highest to the lowest elements of the evaluation shall be provided by the supporting reports and documentation.

**AA-314[3] SSAC analysis.**

- (a) The comparison of proposals is the responsibility of the SSAC and is based on an analysis of the evaluation performed by the SSEB and the results of discussions.
- (b) The SSAC must provide to the SSA all relevant information resulting from the evaluation of proposals and other considerations to assist in a final selection decision by the SSA. As a minimum, the contents described in Attachment AA-8 shall be included in every PAR.
- (c) The contracting officer shall advise the SSAC and SSA when the responsibility of any offeror is questioned. The PAR shall include this information.

**AA-315[4] Source selection briefings.**

Source selection briefings are required by the SSAC and SSA. The SSEB chairperson is responsible for having the results of the evaluation briefed to the SSAC. The chairperson of the SSAC is responsible for having the results of the SSAC analysis briefed to the SSA. The recipients and the scope of the briefings depend on the organizational level at which the SSA has been established. All in attendance must complete a certification (see Attachment AA-10) in which they agree to safeguard source selection information (see AA-403). Any required briefings to the Secretariat to be held in the Pentagon shall be scheduled through SAF/AQCS who will control attendance.

- (a) When the SSA is the ASAF(A) or other official of the Secretariat and the briefing is held in the Pentagon, the following procedures shall be used:
  - (1) Unless otherwise approved by the chairman of the SSAC or the SSA, only members of the SSAC and advisors to the SSA shall attend the briefing. Necessary assistance will be provided by the designated SAF/AQCS action officer; and
  - (2) Copies of the view graphs and any text of oral presentations shall be provided to the SSA at the presentation. SAF/AQCS shall provide to the SSAC chairperson, for the official file, a list of all the people who attended the briefings along with signed copies of the certification (see Attachment AA-10).
- (b) When SSA has been delegated to the PEO, DAC, or MAJCOM commander, the SSA shall personally notify ASAF(A) of the award decision before the public announcement of the award.

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**AA-316[5] Selection and contract award.**

The SSAC chairperson is responsible for having prepared the Source Selection Decision Document for the SSA's signature. The assigned legal advisor and the senior contracting advisor shall coordinate on the Source Selection Decision Document. If the Source Selection Decision Document contains proprietary or source selection information, it shall be marked accordingly. The SSA's signature on the decision document is authority for the contracting officer to award a contract to the selected offeror(s) subject to the necessary administrative approvals. If the ASAF(A) or Secretary is the SSA, the Source Selection Decision Document is provided to SAF/AQCS for staffing and coordination with SAF/GCQ before it is presented to the SSA for signature. The approved Source Selection Decision Document is sent to the SSAC chairperson who will provide it to the contracting officer to include in the official contract file and the source selection record. This document contains:

- (a) The source selection decision;
- (b) Clear rationale for the source selection decision. When award is made ~~on a best value basis~~ **[to other than the low offeror]**, the SSA should make a specific determination that the superiority of the higher priced proposal warrants the additional cost involved **[(see FAR 15.308)]**; and
- (c) Direction to accomplish award of a contract.

**NOTE:**

- (1) The Source Selection Decision Document is a releasable document under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
- (2) An example of the format of a Source Selection Decision Document is at Attachment AA-9. The attachment provides a format only. The actual decision document must include a detailed discussion of the rationale for each source selected.

**AA-317[6] Announcement of source selection decision.**

- (a) When the SSA is ASAF(A) or the PDASAF(A&M), as appropriate, SAF/AQ will be responsible for:
  - (1) Ensuring that news releases and announcements pertaining to the source selection action are prepared and coordinated with all necessary activities;
  - (2) Establishing an agreed time for release of award information in accordance with 5305.303 and in conjunction with the Office of Legislative Liaison (SAF/LL) and Office of Public Affairs (SAF/PA) to ensure that contract award, Congressional announcement, and public announcement occur at the same time; and
  - (3) Notifying the contracting activity of the time for award of the contract.
- (b) When the ASAF(A) has delegated source selection authority, the SSA shall ensure that:
  - (1) Advance information of the decision is provided as may be required in the delegation of source selection authority;
  - (2) Information needed for Congressional announcement is provided to SAF/LLP at the preestablished time (see 5305.303); and
  - (3) Information needed for press releases is provided to the local public affairs office at the pre-established time.

**AA-318[7] Notification and debriefings.**

- (a) *Notifications.* Unless such responsibility is delegated to others by the SSA, the contracting officer shall notify unsuccessful offerors in accordance with FAR 15.4002[503].
- (b) *Debriefings.* Debriefings shall be conducted in accordance with FAR 15.4005[505] and FAR 15.4006[506]. Comparisons shall not be made to other unsuccessful offerors' proposals:

- (1) Debriefings will be with only one offeror at a time;
- (2) Debriefings will be conducted promptly and frankly. When discussions were held, any weaknesses discussed during the debriefing should have already been discussed with the offeror in the form of a an EN]-CR or a DR with the exception of weaknesses identified as a result of the BAFO-[final proposal revision] response. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the debriefing should parallel those identified and documented by the SSEB, SSAC, and PRAG;
- (3) A formal briefing (charts and, if necessary, a script) will be prepared, coordinated with legal counsel and contracting staff, and approval by the SSEB chairperson. A copy of the briefing charts and script will be provided to the offeror on request. The offeror should be encouraged to submit written questions in advance. If written questions are received, every effort should be made to either incorporate answers into the debriefing charts and script or provide written answers at the time of the debriefings;
- (4) Open discussions are permitted on any aspect of the debriefings, including answers to written questions. Discussions regarding the validity of either the requirement or the evaluation process shall be avoided;
- (5) Offerors may ask oral questions during debriefings in addition to written questions submitted prior to the debriefing. Government personnel shall attempt to answer all questions. However, the debriefing team should caucus before providing answers to any questions not provided in advance which are complex, unclear, or may potentially lead to the release of proprietary or classified information. All answers provided must be consistent with the information presented to the SSA and correspond to the areas evaluated during source selection. Occasionally, it may be necessary to provide the offeror with a written response after the debriefing. A written record of the debriefing presentation shall be made part of the official source selection file. A written summary of all questions and answers shall also be retained in the source selection file and may be provided to the offeror; and
- (6) A written debriefing may be conducted by providing the unsuccessful offeror with copies of the source selection decision document and those portions of the PAR that relate to the offeror's proposal. The contracting officer may then permit the offeror to submit written questions. When written questions are permitted, they shall be answered promptly.

**AA-319[8] Lessons learned.**

Following contract award, personnel responsible for the requirement shall determine if publishing a lessons learned report would benefit the source selection process. These reports should contain no source selection or proprietary information, no reference to the specific program involved, and be limited to pertinent issues that may be beneficial to future source selection actions and planning. The report (if prepared) should be provided to SAF/AQCS through the MAJCOM within eight weeks after the source selection decision is announced.

**PART 4 - SOURCE SELECTION DOCUMENTATION AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

**AA-401 General.**

This part provides guidance on the treatment of source selection documentation and the release of source selection information.

- (a) FAR 3.104 implements Section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 423) as amended by subsequent National Defense Authorization Acts.
- (b) FAR Subpart 4.8 prescribes requirements for establishing, maintaining, and disposing of contract files, including source selection related documentation.

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(c) DODD 5500.7, Standards of Conduct, sets forth standards of conduct for Air Force personnel, including circumstances relating to business relationships.

**AA-402 Source selection records.**

(a) Source selection records include source selection information, as defined in FAR 3.104, and other documents that have a direct relationship to the source selection. Source selection information must be protected and appropriately marked in accordance with FAR 3.104. Instructions for protecting source selection information are provided in AA-403. Source selection records include, but are not limited to, the following documents:

- (1) Program Management Directive, when it contains directives pertinent to source selection;
- (2) Acquisition Strategy Panel presentations (view graphs and text) and minutes;
- (3) Source list screening criteria and the results of the screening, including justification(s) for not issuing a solicitation to specific sources;
- (4) The approved Source Selection Plan;
- (5) SSA delegation request and SSAC chairperson nomination request;
- (6) The Source Selection Plan approval document;
- (7) Evaluation criteria (as contained in the RFP);
- \* (8) Numerical weights assigned to the evaluation criteria (if used) and evaluation standards;
- \* (9) All orders or other documentation formally establishing SSAC and SSEB members and amendments to these documents;
- (10) Messages and other notices notifying SSAC and other source selection personnel of meetings;
- (11) Record of attendance and a summary of proceedings of any pre-proposal conference;
- (12) Request for proposal;
- \* (13) All proposals and amendments or alternative proposals submitted by each offeror, including a summary of any oral presentation made directly to the SSEB and/or SSAC;
- \* (14) Evaluation reports including narrative assessments, Independent Cost Analysis (ICA) used in the evaluation, and any Most Probable Cost (MPC) data;
- \* (15) **Evaluation notices (ENs)** ~~Deficiency reports, clarification requests, and offerors' responses;~~
- \* (16) Any correspondence sent to offerors by the SSEB during the evaluation and the responses to the correspondence;
- \* (17) Company specific past performance information (e.g., CPARs);
- (18) All performance data and documentation used to arrive at performance risk assessment;
- (19) The Proposal Analysis Report and attachments;
- \* (20) All source selection presentations (view graphs and text);

- (21) Source Selection Decision Document;
- (22) Lessons learned report;
- (23) Records of attendance at source selection decision briefings;
- (24) Schedules of source selection meetings; and
- (25) Source Selection Information Briefing Certificates (see Attachment AA-10).

\* Normally will require continued protection after contract award.

(b) The establishment of source selection records does not eliminate the requirement for maintaining official contract files required in FAR Subpart 4.8. It is always necessary to protect source selection sensitive records to prevent unauthorized access or release to the public. Because there are separate tables and rules for each category in AFI 37-122, Air Force Records Management Program, the location of all documents shall be noted by use of a cross-reference index in the official contract file.

**AA-403 Protecting source selection records.**

(a) In order to maintain the effectiveness and integrity of the source selection process, all information related to the source selection must be handled with the utmost discretion to avoid any compromise.

(b) While the source selection is in process, disclosure of source selection information is the exclusive responsibility of the SSA and the contracting officer (see FAR 3.104). After contract award, this authority is vested in SAF/AQC, or the responsible PEO, DAC, or activity commander for the specific contract or records involved. The responsible official may delegate authority to grant access; *but*, authority to release source selection information is nondelegable. Requests for access to or release of source selection information and the authorizations granting access or release must be in writing.

(1) Access is defined as receiving a source selection record or the information in a source selection record or being permitted to view a source selection record if the record is not physically retained by the requester.

(2) Release is defined as permitting a copy of a source selection document to be physically retained by the requester.

(c) In addition to the marking requirements in FAR 3.104, source selection information must also be protected and marked "For Official Use Only (FOUO)." The cover sheet format in Attachment AA-11 may be reproduced and used as appropriate. The cover sheet should be printed on yellow paper when available. Classified source selection documents must also be marked and protected as required by DODI 5200.1-R/AFP 31-4, Information Security Program.

(d) All persons involved in the source selection process (including non-Government advisors and administrative personnel) will be required to execute a "Source Selection Information Briefing Certificate" before they are given access to source selection information. The SSAC chairperson shall ensure that the certificates from all source selection team members, including SSAC members, are collected and filed with the source selection records. (See Attachment AA-10 for the certificate format.)

(1) Only individuals who have a strict need-to-know and have signed the proper certification may have access to source selection information. Need-to-know must be clearly established before any individual or activity is afforded access to or release of source selection information while the source selection is in process or for a specific record after contract award.

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- (2) Under no circumstances will any advisor or member of the SSAC, SSEB, or any other person having access to source selection information discuss the proceedings with any individual not a member of the source selection organization, except as authorized in this appendix.
- (3) Any unauthorized disclosure or release of source selection information will be investigated and, as appropriate, treated under disciplinary procedures authorized by law or administrative procedures.
- (e) Access to source selection sensitive information must be strictly controlled at all organizational levels. Access does not automatically extend to other individuals in the organizational chain of command of the individuals who are involved in the source selection.
- (1) If the SSA desires to provide information to persons at higher organizational levels, each of those individuals must complete the certificate (see Attachment AA-10) and send it to the contracting officer to include in the source selection records.
- (2) At the MAJCOM level, the MAJCOM Chief of Contracting is responsible for controlling access to source selection information.
- (3) Access control at the Secretariat and HQ USAF is the responsibility of SAF/AQCS. Each Secretariat and HQ USAF office involved in the source selection will designate one individual and alternate to participate on the SSAC and to review and handle the source selection documentation for a specific acquisition. This designation must be in writing.
- (f) Even when source selection information falls within the categories of materials that may be withheld from public disclosure (i.e., a Proposal Analysis Report), each document, or portion of a document, must have an independent basis for exemption.
- (1) Any questions regarding public disclosure of information should be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be referred to the appropriate Freedom of Information Act advisors.
- (2) Documents that would otherwise be exempt from disclosure may be subject to disclosure when incorporated by reference in a nonexempt document (i.e., when a source selection document is incorporated by reference in the resulting contract). Such data normally is releasable following contract award unless there is a compelling reason to deny release (i.e., if it contains classified information).
- (g) When a protest, before or after contract award, has been lodged to the General Accounting Office (GAO), General Services Board of Contract Appeals (GSBCA), or other level in which the Secretariat or HQ USAF is involved, any and all pertinent source selection documents shall be forwarded to SAF/AQCX in accordance with Subpart 5333.1.
- (h) Requests for source selection information by Congress or the General Accounting Office (GAO) will be processed under AFPD 90-21/AFI 90-201, Air Force Relations with Congress, and AFI 65-401, Air Force Relations with the General Accounting Office (GAO). These activities must be informed of the restriction against public disclosure of confidential or proprietary information provided by offerors. DOD and Air Force activities, such as the Inspector General (IG), auditor, and other specially appointed activities must also obtain written authority for access or release in accordance with this appendix.

**NOTE: Attachments have not been revised to reflect the new FAR 15 Rewrite. The attachments are intended for use as samples only, and may be modified as necessary to comply with FAR 15 and the revised text contained within this Appendix.**