



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, DC

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

30 SEP 1998

CONTRACTING POLICY MEMO 98-C-15

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/FOA/DRU (CONTRACTING)

FROM: SAF/AQC
1060 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1060

SUBJECT: Class Deviation to FAR 42.1502(a), Past Performance Requirements for Science and Technology (S&T) Contracting

In accordance with DFARS 201.402(3) and under the authority granted by Director of Defense Procurement memo dated 30 Sep 97, I hereby approve a class deviation to FAR 42.1502(a) to exclude the on-going collection of past performance information (PPI) for Science and Technology (S&T) contracting. This deviation is for contracted basic research and applied research, and includes construction of "proof-of-principle" working prototypes, projects funded by program budget accounts 6.1 (Basic Research), 6.2 (Exploratory Development), and 6.3 (Advanced Technology Development).

The basis for this decision is the 20 Nov 97 OUSD (A&T) memorandum entitled, **Collection of Past Performance Information in the Department of Defense**, which states in part "... PPI [Past Performance Information] shall be collected only at the time of the particular acquisition. No dollar threshold or the requirement to maintain an automated database has been established for this category. Collection of science and technology PPI shall be limited to relevant information as determined by the Source Selection team. Requests for PPI shall be tailored to each procurement during the source selection process, with emphasis placed on the expertise of key personnel."

The collection of past performance data on S&T contracts may be impractical to apply and of limited utility in the selection of future sources. S&T contracts often require contractors to push the edge of scientific and technological knowledge and the requirements of the contract may involve work that has never before been attempted. Under these circumstances, there may be no past or future "similar" circumstances against which to compare/use the collected evaluation. S&T contracting does not lend itself well to the typical performance evaluation because those measures (cost, schedule, product quality, etc.) are not necessarily the indicators of the quality of the research accomplished. This community often learns more from a researcher's failure, than from successes. Researcher qualifications and soundness of technical approach are typical evaluation factors for S&T contracts.

This class deviation is effective for one year or until the FAR is revised, whichever occurs first. My action officer for this matter is Lt Col Dave Mason, SAF/AQCP, DSN 425-7013 or masond@af.pentagon.mil.



TERRY L. RANEY, Colonel, USAF
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary (Contracting)
Assistant Secretary (Acquisition)