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DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

FILE: B-189459

DATE: October 7, 1977

MATTER OF: Tri-Com, Inc.

DIGEST:

Where typographical error left uncertain whether product would satisfy Government's requirement, bid was properly rejected as nonresponsive.

Tri-Com, Inc. protests the determination of the Department of the Air Force to reject all bids under IFB F40650-77-B0027 for an analog data acquisition system. The Air Force found that both of the bids received were nonresponsive, and has decided that the procurement should be resolicited.

It appears that the Air Force considered the Tri-Com bid to have been nonresponsive for a number of reasons. Although Tri-Com takes exception to all of the grounds advanced by the Air Force, it is not necessary that we reach or discuss all of the arguments presented, if, as explained below, the Air Force's position on any one is sustained.

In this regard, in defining the characteristics of voltage controlled oscillators (VCO's), paragraph TP-5.1.5 of the solicitation required that, "Subcarrier total harmonic distortion shall be less than 0.5% over the entire deviation range of the VCO." Tri-Com proposed to meet the VCO requirement with its Model 416 Auto-Cal VCO. Its descriptive data sheet, included in its bid, stated as follows:

"Carrier Distortion: Total harmonic distortion is less than 0.5% over the full deviation bandwidth for deviations less than +17%."

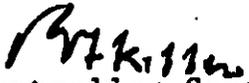
Tri-Com asserts that, "The Model 416 specification contains an obvious typographical error," and should read "for deviations less than 47%." It contends that the 17 percent figure is incompatible with its statement

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in its descriptive data that the 416 shows a +40 percent deviation capability and deviation limiting at 120 percent of bandedge. In this regard, Tri-Com states that its "VCO circuitry is designed to limit at slightly less than 120% bandedge, which is a maximum of +48%, in order to ensure that the 120% bandedge specification is consistently met on a production basis."

In our view, the plain implication of Tri-Com's bid was that the 0.5 percent figure was assured only for less than 17 percent deviation. Tri-Com's alleged erroneous reference to 17 rather than 47 does not appear from the face of the bid, and the mistaken figure creates doubt regarding Tri-Com's understanding of the solicitation requirements. If the 17 percent figure is inconsistent with other data given by Tri-Com, regarding deviation capability and deviation limiting, it casts a cloud of ambiguity over Tri-Com's stated intention to meet all of the requirements of the solicitation. A bidder may not be permitted to explain the meaning of its bid after bid opening, since the effect of doing so is to undermine the integrity of the competitive bidding system. Tennessee Lithographing Co., B-188967, May 26, 1977, 77-1 CPD 371; Leavitt Machine Co., B-187477, March 15, 1977, 77-1 CPD 191. Moreover, a mistake may not be corrected to render a nonresponsive bid responsive. General Electric Co., B-184873, May 4, 1976, 76-1 CPD 298.

Accordingly, Tri-Com's protest is denied.


Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States