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DECISION



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

FILE: B-207429

DATE: September 23, 1982

MATTER OF: Amdahl Corporation

DIGEST:

Requirement for offered computer system to provide 24 megabytes of storage in initial configuration and 32 megabytes in augmented configuration does not lead to unequal competition where requirement applies to all offerors and question of whether and how much added capability is to be required is based on how well system satisfies workload. In addition, agency's selection of awardee's initial configuration was consistent with criteria.

Amdahl Corporation (Amdahl) protests the award of a contract by the Library of Congress (Library) to the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) for the lease of a computer system.

Amdahl contends that the competition was not conducted on an equal basis. We deny the protest.

The Library issued request for proposals (RFP) No. 81-16 for the lease of an IBM compatible computer to share a job queue with the Library's present IBM Model 3033 computer to obtain sufficient capacity to support the Library's increasing workload over the next 4 years. The RFP required that the offered systems be upgradeable either by augmentation of the initial configuration or by substitution of a larger compatible computer. Offerors were required to schedule the single permitted augmentation based on the ability of each system configuration to process the workload stated in the RFP. Each configuration was to be benchmarked with its maximum anticipated workload. The Library reserved the right to defer augmentation. As originally issued, the RFP stated that the initial system configuration had to have 16 megabytes (1 megabyte = 1 million characters) of memory with the capability for expansion to 32 megabytes. In amendment 4 to the RFP, this requirement was changed to require that:

"At a minimum, the initial configuration must have sixteen megabytes of storage with expansion capability up to twenty-four megabytes. The augmented system must be expandable to thirty-two megabytes if the software allows."

The Library interpreted this revision to mean that offerors could propose a smaller (and presumably less expensive) computer, capable of supporting up to 24 megabytes, as an initial system, so long as it was upgradeable to a computer capable of supporting 32 megabytes. The RFP gave the Library the option to add memory in 8-megabyte increments, up to the maximum of 32 megabytes, anytime during the life of the lease.

IBM proposed to furnish an IBM model 3033AP, capable of supporting up to 24 megabytes, as its initial configuration, with the substitution in the 47th month of a larger computer, a model 3081, capable of supporting 32 megabytes. Based on a review of IBM's benchmark, the Library determined that IBM's initial system would satisfy its workload requirements for the 4 years and awarded the lease to IBM on that basis.

Amdahl contends that amendment 4 did not change the original requirement that the initial system had to be able to support 32 megabytes if it was not going to be upgraded or replaced with a larger computer. Amdahl asserts that the Library's acceptance of IBM's initial configuration was therefore improper because IBM's 3033 cannot be upgraded to 32 megabytes. Based on this premise, Amdahl contends that the Library's interpretation of the amendment fostered unequal competition, quoting from Amdahl's protest, by "allowing certain vendors (who do not offer interim computers) to only meet an upgrade requirement of 24 megabytes--while requiring other vendors (who offer interim computers) to meet upgrade requirements of 32 megabytes." We disagree.

In our view, all offerors were free, within the limits of the RFP to propose any system or combination of systems, upgradeable from 16 to 32 megabytes in 8 megabyte increments, that would satisfy the Library's workload requirements. Nothing in the solicitation, however, obligated the Library to acquire the full 32 megabyte capability since the question of whether and to what degree upgrade would be

required depended on how well each system satisfied the performance requirements reflected in the benchmark--which were the same for all offerors. In other words, all offerors had to propose a range of systems--from 16 to 32 megabytes--but how much of that range was to be acquired (and when) depended on how well the system performed the job. These criteria were common to all offerors and, in these circumstances, we consider this to have been an equal competition. Moreover, IBM did offer a system upgradeable to 32 megabytes by substituting a model 3081 for the 3033AP in IBM's initial system and the Library's selection of IBM's initial system was consistent with the criteria of the RFP. We find no basis to object to the Library's selection of IBM.

The protest is denied.

Harry R. Cline
for Comptroller General
of the United States