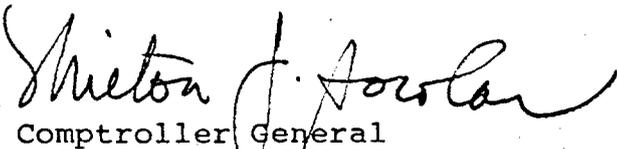


HHS's implementation of the Federal Procurement Regulations' (FPR) Small Purchases provision, FPR 1-3.6 (1977 ed.), requires competition from a "reasonable number of qualified sources" in order "to assure that the procurement is to the advantage of the Government, price and other factors considered." 41 C.F.R., chapter 3, § 3-3.603-50(b)(3) (1979). The term "reasonable number of qualified sources" is defined, in the case of purchases between \$5,000 and \$10,000, to be a minimum of three. 41 C.F.R., chapter 3, supra. Prior to award the contracting officer is required to determine that the proposed price is reasonable. 41 C.F.R., chapter 3, § 3-3.603-50(b)(9). It is apparent that once one of the three quotes received was excluded from the competition the contracting officer no longer had the minimum number of required competitors upon which to found his determination as to the reasonableness of the proposed price. Moreover, we have not objected to a second round of B&FO's where one of several competitors responding to an RFQ makes a mistake in its quotation which is only discovered after the initial closing date for B&FO's. See Proprietary Computer Systems, Inc., 57 Comp. Gen. 800 (1978), 78-2 CPD 212.

Therefore, we see no impropriety in the instant procurement procedures and the protest is summarily denied as the protester's initial submission shows it is without merit. Decilog, Inc., B-193914, February 5, 1979, 79-1 CPD 81.

  
For the Comptroller General  
of the United States