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DECISION



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

FILE: B-206801

DATE: August 10, 1982

MATTER OF: Tridair Helicopters

DIGEST:

Language in a solicitation which expressly allows bidders the opportunity to submit alternate "all or none" bids for line items 11 and 12 does not restrict bidders from submitting "all or none" bids for any other combination of line items. Therefore, the agency's award on the basis of a low "all or none" bid for line items 1 and 2 is proper.

Tridair Helicopters protests the award of a contract to Chet Rasberry, Inc., under solicitation No. R5-82-6 issued by the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. The solicitation contained 16 line items, each representing helicopter service out of specified bases of operation located in various National Forests in California. Specifically, this protest concerns the award of line items 1 and 2 involving helicopter services to be provided from 2 bases of operation in the Cleveland National Forest. Tridair is the low bidder for line item 1 but is second low for the combination of line items 1 and 2 behind Rasberry's alternate bid based on receiving award for both items. Tridair contends that award to Rasberry on an "all or none" basis is incorrect. We deny the protest.

Tridair argues that award based on "all or none" bidding was not allowed on a combination of items 1 and 2 because the solicitation did not expressly provide for such bidding and award. In this regard, Tridair asserts that since the solicitation expressly did allow bidders to submit alternate bids on the basis of receiving award for a combination of items 11 and 12, this meant that award on the basis of "all or none" bids for any other combination of line items would not be considered. We disagree.

As a general rule, a low bid on an "all or none" basis is responsive and must be accepted by the Government in the absence of a provision to the contrary in the solicitation. 52 Comp. Gen. 756 (1973). In our opinion there is no express prohibition in the instant solicitation against bids and awards based on "all or none" combinations. On the contrary, the "Solicitation Instructions and Conditions" provide for award in a manner "most advantageous to the Government, price and other factors considered." In this regard, we have long held that where the acceptance of a bid submitted on an "all or none" basis will result in a lower cost to the Government than would a combination of bids without such qualification, the "all or none" bid should be accepted even though a partial award could be made at a lower unit cost. 35 Comp. Gen. 383 (1956).

The agency reports that the reason it expressly alerted bidders to the opportunity of submitting an alternate "all or none" bid for items 11 and 12 was its desire to have both items accomplished by the same contractor, if possible. That provision states only that bidders may, at their options "also bid for both * * * items 11 and 12 on the basis of receiving award for both items. This is in lieu of or in addition to bidding on these items separately." We do not believe that this provision restricts bidders from submitting "all or none" bids for any other grouping of items.

The protest is denied.

Milton J. Rosler
for Comptroller General
of the United States