



Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

Matter of: Cooper Industries, Inc., Crouse-Hinds Molded Products Division

File: B-247909

Date: March 18, 1992

Edward L. Martin, Jr., for the protester,
Catherine M. Evans, Esq., Office of the General Counsel,
GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

General Accounting Office (GAO) will not entertain protest allegation that specifications should be more restrictive, since GAO's role is to ensure that full and open competition requirements are met, not to protect any interest a protester may have in more restrictive specifications.

DECISION

Cooper Industries, Inc., Crouse-Hinds Molded Products Division (Crouse-Hinds) protests the terms of request for technical proposals (RFTP) No. DACA47-92-B-0020, step one of a two-step solicitation, issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for receptacle-plug combinations. Crouse-Hinds alleges that the RFTP is defective because it does not require that the items conform to military specification MIL-C-38159B(USAF), a general specification for molded rubber connectors for 480/277 volt ramp power.

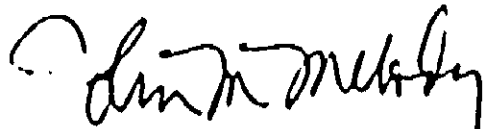
We dismiss the protest.

The statement of work for the receptacle-plug combinations stated that the requirements are "generally derived from MIL-C-38159B(USAF)." In this regard, many of the requirements in the work statement conformed to the military specification, while others deviated from it. Crouse-Hinds considered the work statement to be inconsistent with the military specification, and wrote to the contracting officer to ask why the solicitation did not require total compliance with that specification. The contracting officer replied that the required connector is a new design, with less restrictive requirements than the connector described in the military specification; the specification was chosen as a convenient model for the design of the new item. Upon learning that the statement of work would not be changed, Crouse-Hinds filed this protest.

We will not consider Crouse-Hinds' argument that imposition of the more restrictive military specification is necessary to meet the agency's minimum needs. Our role in deciding bid protests is to ensure that full and open competition requirements are met, not to protect any interest the protester may have in more restrictive specifications. Cryptek, Inc., B-240369, Nov. 1, 1990, 90-2 CPD ¶ 357. We therefore will not review a protest that an agency should have applied additional, more restrictive specifications in order to meet the protester's definition of the agency's minimum needs. Id.

While Crouse-Hinds maintains that use of the military specification would increase rather than restrict competition, we think the protester really is arguing that use of the military specification would make it easier for firms that already have products conforming to the specification (as does Crouse-Hinds) to compete; this is not the same as increasing competition, as the agency did here, by declining to impose unnecessary requirements.

The protest is dismissed.



John M. Melody
Assistant General Counsel