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## Decision

**Matter of:** Synergy Group Alliance, LLC

**File:** B-422113; B-422113.2

**Date:** January 12, 2024

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### DIGEST

1. Protest challenging the agency's evaluation of the protester's proposal is denied where the record shows that the agency's evaluation was reasonable and consistent with the terms of the solicitation.
  2. Protest that the agency applied unstated evaluation criteria in its evaluation of the protester's proposal is denied where the record reflects that the challenged evaluation was premised on matters that were logically encompassed by the stated evaluation criteria.
  3. Protest challenging the agency's cost realism evaluation of the protester's proposal is denied where the record shows that the agency reasonably concluded it could not determine the protester's probable cost due to inconsistencies in its proposal.
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### DECISION

Synergy Group Alliance, LLC, a small business of Richland, Washington, protests the exclusion of its proposal from the competitive range under request for proposals (RFP) No. 89233123RNA000175, issued by the Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration, for counter nuclear smuggling system (CNSS) detection and deterrence services. Synergy argues that the agency unreasonably evaluated the protester's proposal, used unstated evaluation criteria, engaged in disparate treatment, and failed to conduct a proper cost realism evaluation.

We deny the protest.

## BACKGROUND

On May 1, 2023, the agency issued the RFP for tasks associated with design, integration, construction, communications, logistics, training, and equipment procurement to support the deployment of counter nuclear smuggling systems. Agency Report (AR), Tab 8, RFP at 102.<sup>1</sup> The RFP described the procurement's objective as being to deploy integrated sustainable counter nuclear smuggling systems in cooperation with international partners in order to strengthen the overall capability of partner countries to detect, disrupt, and investigate smuggling of nuclear and radiological materials that could be used in acts of terrorism. *Id.* The RFP contemplated the award of up to three indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contracts with a three-year base period and two two-year option periods. RFP at 9, 92. In addition to the base IDIQ awards, the agency advised that it intended to award one initial task order for program managers to each IDIQ awardee and a single regional task order for the Africa I region.<sup>2</sup> RFP at 98.

Award would be made on a best-value tradeoff basis considering the following six factors, listed in descending order of importance: (1) corporate experience, (2) organizational structure and key personnel, (3) project scenario responses, (4) technical approach to Africa I task order, (5) past performance, and (6) total evaluated price. RFP at 95-98. The RFP advised that the first five criteria, when combined, were significantly more important than price. *Id.* at 96. When evaluating proposals under the first four factors, the agency would identify significant strengths, strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies; and it would use adjectival ratings of excellent, good, satisfactory, and less than satisfactory. *Id.* at 99. The RFP provided for past performance to be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. *Id.* at 99-100.

With regard to the project scenario factor, as relevant here, the RFP provided for proposals to be evaluated based on offerors' responses to two different scenarios. RFP at 97. The first project scenario was for a "high security risk border area" and the second was for "austere environment equipment deployment." *Id.* at 85-86. The RFP required offerors' responses to both scenarios to include a project plan identifying the

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<sup>1</sup> The agency amended the RFP four times. Citations to the RFP are to the conformed solicitation provided by the agency at Tab 8 of the agency report. Citations to pages in the record, including the RFP, are to the Bates-numbered pages provided by the agency.

<sup>2</sup> The solicitation advised that the issuance of the program manager task order(s) was meant to "ensure availability of the [p]rogram [m]anager and [d]eputy [p]rogram [m]anager" throughout the entire period of performance. RFP at 98. It stated that the Africa I regional task order would involve CNSS deployment services for fifteen countries within Africa, as well as a CNSS equipment deployment and a border crossing CNSS deployment specifically for the country of Niger. RFP at 160, 167-168.

manner in which the project would be staffed; the work would be overseen; quality would be ensured; technical integration subject matter expertise would be provided; testing and inspection would be conducted; and maintenance and training would be facilitated. *Id.* at 85. As relevant here, the RFP advised that the agency would evaluate responses to the first scenario based on the offeror's approach to "how the project would be staffed and how remote oversight would be provided," in order to "determine the degree to which the approach is likely to result in a safe, efficient, and successful performance." *Id.* at 97.

With respect to the Africa I technical approach, the solicitation required offerors to provide a "detailed [p]roject [p]lan" in response to this factor, including "an organizational structure, lines of communication, personnel identified by labor category, methods for performing the work, and level of effort." RFP at 86. Proposals would be evaluated based on the offeror's "understanding of the requirements of the Africa I [statement of work]," including the CNSS deployment requirements specific to Niger, as well as any technical risks and associated strategies for minimizing or avoiding such risks. *Id.* at 97. As relevant here, the RFP warned that "[i]nconsistencies between the proposed technical approach. . . and the [c]ost [p]roposal may adversely impact the [o]fferor's rating for this [c]riterion." *Id.*

With regard to price, the RFP advised that cost/price proposals would be evaluated for price reasonableness for both the project manager and Africa I task orders and that for the Africa I task order, cost proposals would be evaluated for cost realism.<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 97. Specifically, the agency would evaluate cost proposals for the Africa I task order "to determine if the estimated proposed cost elements are realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a clear understanding of the [statement of work] requirements, and are consistent with the [s]taffing [p]lan summary." *Id.* at 98. The RFP again cautioned that "[i]nconsistencies between the cost proposal and other portions of the proposal could raise concerns regarding the [o]fferor's understanding of the requirements and its ability to perform the work for the proposed cost." *Id.*

Finally, the RFP advised that "[p]ursuant to [Federal Acquisition Regulation] 15.306(c), the [c]ontracting [o]fficer's determination of competitive range for [submitted] proposals" would consider all six evaluation criteria. RFP at 94. Only offerors whose proposals the agency found "to have a reasonable chance for award of a contract" would be included in the competitive range. *Id.* Additionally, the solicitation cautioned that an "overall rating of unsatisfactory in one evaluation criterion may result in elimination of the proposal from further consideration regardless of the rating of the other criteria." *Id.* at 95.

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<sup>3</sup> The RFP provided that the program managers task order was to be issued on a firm fixed price basis, whereas the Africa I task order was to be proposed and issued on a cost-plus-fixed-fee basis. RFP at 89.

By the June 8 proposal due date, the agency “received multiple, timely proposals,” including Synergy’s proposal. Contracting Officer’s Statement/Memorandum of Law (COS/MOL) at 15.

The agency evaluated Synergy’s proposal as follows:

	<b>Corporate Experience</b>	<b>Organizational Structure and Key Personnel</b>	<b>Project Scenario Responses</b>	<b>Technical Approach to Africa I</b>	<b>Past Performance</b>	<b>Price</b>
<b>Synergy</b>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Less than Satisfactory	Less than Satisfactory	Pass	N/A

AR, Tab 20, Integrated Project Team Evaluation (IPTE) Report at 8.

Regarding the project scenario responses factor, the evaluators assessed two significant weaknesses in Synergy’s proposal based on the protester’s response to the first scenario. *Id.* at 121-122. The first significant weakness concerned Synergy’s lack of a clear staffing plan and the second concerned its lack of a clear oversight plan. The evaluators found that these problems “appreciably increase[] the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.” *Id.* With respect to the staffing plan, the evaluators found that Synergy’s plan “broadly delineates” roles and responsibilities but “provides few specifics,” fails to give details “on how the personnel would be vetted, trained, or integrated into the team,” and does not clearly state whether Synergy or Synergy’s main subcontractor would staff certain positions. AR, Tab 20, IPTE Report at 121. With respect to the oversight plan, the evaluators noted that Synergy outlined the history of the remote oversight plan’s development and explained the “technical means used for remote oversight [REDACTED],” but failed to provide specifics on how the oversight would occur. *Id.* The evaluators also identified two strengths--one for Synergy’s [REDACTED] in response to the first scenario and one for Synergy’s response to logistics in the second scenario. *Id.* Ultimately, the evaluators found that the two significant weaknesses outweighed the two strengths, resulting in a less than satisfactory rating. *Id.* at 123.

Regarding the Africa I technical approach factor, the evaluators documented “numerous errors and inconsistencies” both within Synergy’s technical proposal and between its technical proposal and cost proposal. AR, Tab 20, IPTE Report at 139. Overall, the agency assessed one weakness and twelve significant weaknesses in Synergy’s technical approach to the Africa I task order.<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 124-139. As an example, the

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<sup>4</sup> The agency identified significant weaknesses in the areas of organizational structure, lines of communication, personnel, level of effort, equipment assumptions review, market research report, revised equipment list, design, equipment procurement, installation/integration, inspection and testing, project close-out, remote oversight, and health, safety, and security. AR, Tab 20, IPTE Report at 140.

evaluators identified one of those significant weaknesses based on Synergy's "lack of detail on lines of communication," which the agency reasoned "demonstrates a lack of understanding of the importance of clear and controlled lines of communication to the success of [the nuclear smuggling detection and deterrence] project." *Id.* at 126. Ultimately, the agency concluded that the "lack of detail [in Synergy's technical approach] was exacerbated by inconsistencies and lack of clarity. . . that prevented the [agency] from determining the contractor's understanding of the requirements" for the Africa I task order factor. *Id.* at 124. The agency assigned a rating of less than satisfactory to Synergy's proposal under this fourth factor, finding that Synergy's technical approach "contains a [d]eficiency that results in a high degree of risk." *Id.* at 140.

Regarding price, the evaluators performed the price reasonableness and cost realism reviews required by the solicitation and determined that Synergy's proposed costs "were not considered realistic and present[] the [agency] with significant cost risk." AR, Tab 20, IPTE Report at 8. Specifically, the evaluators concluded that they could not determine the probable cost of Synergy's performance with any confidence because "[m]any inconsistencies were found between the cost and technical proposals." *Id.* at 144. For example, the evaluators pointed to the fact that "proposed labor categories are not consistent with the proposed technical approach" and that the allocation of work between Synergy and its major subcontractor "is not clear in the technical approach as portions of the scope are shared differently in various charts, tables, and narratives." *Id.* at 146.

The agency found that Synergy's proposal was not among the most highly rated proposals and did not have a reasonable chance of receiving award. COS/MOL at 28. After being notified of its proposal's exclusion from the competitive range and receiving a debriefing, Synergy filed this protest.

## DISCUSSION

Synergy challenges multiple aspects of the agency's evaluation of its proposal, including the agency's evaluation under the third, fourth, and sixth evaluation criteria. The protester argues that the agency unreasonably assessed significant weaknesses to its proposal, applied unstated evaluation criteria, and did not conduct a proper cost realism analysis. After reviewing the record, we find no basis to sustain Synergy's protest.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In its various protest submissions, Synergy has raised arguments that are in addition to, or variations of, those specifically discussed below. While we do not specifically address all the protester's arguments, we have considered all of them and find that they afford no basis on which to sustain the protest.

### Factor 3: Project Scenario Response

The protester contends that the agency unreasonably assessed the firm's proposal with two significant weaknesses under the project scenario response factor. As noted above, the first significant weakness was for the lack of a clear staffing plan and the second resulted from the lack of a clear oversight plan, both of which Synergy submitted for the first scenario. Synergy argues that it provided "multiple examples of how it will staff the scenarios," including a diagram explaining the responsibilities of various critical labor categories, an "extensive narrative" explaining "what happens when [REDACTED]," and a section explaining how the [REDACTED] Synergy used in prior contracts will be utilized in the procurement at issue. Comments and Supp. Protest at 12. With respect to the oversight plan, the protester contends that it provided "a clear plan to oversee work" detailing key staff and responsibilities, staffing and testing plans, and an explanation for how personnel would be handled in "various areas." *Id.* at 13. Synergy also references its "experience in this area from past contracts" to support its argument that it fully responded to the solicitation requirements for a remote oversight plan. *Id.*

The agency responds that Synergy's complaint amounts to mere disagreement with the agency's judgment. Supp. COS/MOL at 11-14. The agency asserts that Synergy provided only general information for its staffing plan and remote oversight plan and failed to include pertinent details for both. *Id.* at 12-13. The agency points to its contemporaneous evaluation, referencing, for example, how the evaluators concluded that Synergy's remote oversight plan states that the [REDACTED] would "oversee equipment arrival, receipt inspection, functional testing, [and] customs clearance," but did not explain "how, where, and when these activities will be performed." Supp. COS/MOL at 13-14 (citing AR, Tab 20, IPTE Report at 121-122). The agency also argues that the protester had a responsibility to provide a well-written proposal; and the agency was not required to search Synergy's responses to other evaluation factors, such as its corporate experience and past performance, in order to evaluate Synergy's response to the project scenario factor. Supp. COS/MOL at 12, 14.

Our Office will not reevaluate proposals but will instead examine the record to determine whether the agency's judgment was reasonable and consistent with the stated evaluation criteria and applicable procurement statutes and regulations. *MicroTechnologies, LLC*, B-413091, B-413091.2, Aug. 11, 2016, 2016 CPD ¶ 219 at 4-5. An offeror's disagreement with the agency's judgment, without more, is insufficient to establish that the agency acted unreasonably. *Id.* Further, it is an offeror's responsibility to submit a well-written proposal, with adequately detailed information which clearly demonstrates compliance with the solicitation requirements and allows a meaningful review by the procuring agency. See *International Med. Corps*, B-403688, Dec. 6, 2010, 2010 CPD ¶ 292 at 8.

We have no basis to question the reasonableness of the agency's evaluation findings with respect to the identified two significant weaknesses in Synergy's proposal for its response to the first scenario under the project scenarios factor. As previously noted,

the RFP advised that the agency would evaluate responses to the first scenario based on the offeror's approach to "how the project would be staffed and how remote oversight would be provided," in order to "determine the degree to which the approach is likely to result in a safe, efficient, and successful performance." RFP at 97. The record supports the agency's determination that Synergy's proposal lacks detail. For example, under a set of bullet points in a figure intended to explain Synergy's "plan to ensure quality," the proposal states that the [REDACTED] "monitors, evaluates, assesses, and witnesses work efforts, performance, and acceptance testing," but fails to provide any further details elaborating on how, when, or where this monitoring, evaluation, and assessment will occur. AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical Proposal at 53; see AR, Tab 20, IPTe Report at 121-122. Similarly, under the set of bullet points regarding Synergy's plan to oversee work, the proposal states that the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] will "oversee equipment arrival, receipt inspection, functional testing, [and c]ustoms clearance," but, as the evaluators concluded, provides no further details on what this oversight would entail or how or when these activities will occur. *Id.* With respect to the staffing plan, as the IPTe Report notes, Synergy's proposal states that it will use "[REDACTED] personnel as required to provide direct oversight," but then lists the staff performing these responsibilities as [REDACTED] staff and not [REDACTED] staff. *Id.*; AR, Tab 20, IPTe Report at 121. Given the record, we have no basis to question the agency's conclusion that Synergy's response to the first scenario lacks clarity or detail. See AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical Proposal at 52-53. We also agree with the agency that the protester had the responsibility to submit a well-written proposal, and Synergy cannot fall back on its corporate experience or past performance to bolster a lack of detail in its actual response to the project scenarios factor.<sup>6</sup> Supp. COS/MOL at 12, 14. Ultimately, the protester has not demonstrated that the agency's evaluation was unreasonable. This protest ground is denied.

#### Factor 4: Technical Approach to Africa I Task Order

The protester alleges that the agency relied on unstated evaluation criteria when it evaluated Synergy's proposal because it expected more detail than the solicitation required. Comments and Supp. Protest at 7. As noted above, the solicitation required offerors to include "an organizational structure, lines of communication, personnel identified by labor category, methods for performing the work, and level of effort" in providing a "detailed [p]roject [p]lan" for the Africa I task order technical approach factor. RFP at 86. Synergy challenges the evaluators' findings that Synergy's technical approach "does not demonstrate the [o]fferor's understanding of the requirements" of

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Synergy states broadly that "[w]hen [certain] staff are not allowed to travel to a site, we apply our [REDACTED] developed during [a previous] contract to provide effective oversight," and then spends the rest of the paragraph explaining how this plan was developed and used in prior contracts, rather than explaining how the plan would be utilized and implemented in performance of the immediate contract. AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical Proposal at 52. This is just one example of Synergy's attempts to fall back on its prior experience rather than taking the opportunity to detail its technical approach to accomplishing the requirements for this procurement.

that factor, and that the “lack of detail [in the technical approach and project plan] was exacerbated by inconsistencies and lack of clarity. . . that prevented the [agency] from determining the contractor’s understanding of the requirements.” Comments and Supp. Protest at 30 (citing AR, Tab 20, IPTe Report at 124). For example, the protester contends that the agency “unreasonably assigned a significant weakness to [Synergy] for its lines of communication” and applied unstated evaluation criteria in focusing on the number of communication lines. Comments and Supp. Protest at 17-18. The protester challenges the agency’s conclusion that the “lack of detail [in Synergy’s proposal] on lines of communication demonstrates a lack of understanding of the importance of clear and controlled lines of communication.” *Id.* at 17 (citing AR, Tab 20, IPTe Report at 126). Synergy argues that its proposal “provided a clear diagram showing the planned organizational chart,” including the responsibilities and lines of communication for the proposed [REDACTED] manager, [REDACTED] manager, and [REDACTED] manager. Comments and Supp. Protest at 17-18. Ultimately, the protester asserts that the solicitation called for the Africa I technical approach to include lines of communication, and its proposal “clearly provides for distinct lines of communication.” Supp. Comments at 9.

The agency responds that “the issue was not the number of lines [of communication], or whom they were between, but rather the lack of detail for a project of this magnitude.” Supp. COS/MOL at 23. The agency points to the evaluators’ conclusion that, other than three lines connecting various labor categories and host country stakeholders, Synergy’s technical approach to the Africa I factor did not address communication. *Id.*; see AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical Proposal at 66. The agency also asserts that it reasonably considered the lines of communication as part of its evaluation, contending that the number of lines of communication proposed by an offeror is “reasonably related to or encompassed under a stated evaluation of [] offerors’ proposed lines of communication.” Supp. COS/MOL at 24.

Again, an offeror’s disagreement with the agency’s judgment, without more, is insufficient to establish that the agency acted unreasonably. *MicroTechnologies, LLC, supra*. Moreover, although agencies are required to identify in a solicitation all major evaluation factors, they are not required to specifically identify each and every element an agency considers during an evaluation. FAR 15-304(d). Rather, as a general matter, an agency properly may take into account specific, albeit not expressly identified, matters that are logically encompassed by or related to the stated evaluation criteria. *Trailboss Enterprises, Inc.*, B-419209, Dec. 23, 2020, 2020 CPD ¶ 414 at 6.

We find the agency’s identification of a significant weakness in Synergy’s proposal based on its failure to sufficiently discuss lines of communication to be reasonable. The record shows that the solicitation explicitly required offerors to provide a “detailed” project plan for the Africa I technical approach factor and to address lines of communication within this project plan. RFP at 86. The record also shows that throughout the Africa I technical approach section Synergy provided relatively vague, conclusory statements regarding communication. See AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical



Proposal.<sup>7</sup> We agree with the agency that it reasonably considered the number of lines of communication within Synergy's proposed project plan as part of its evaluation to determine whether the protester sufficiently addressed its approach to communication. Supp. COS/MOL at 24. Further, the record supports the agency's argument that the protester's proposal was insufficiently detailed; Synergy provided a diagram with lines drawn between various labor categories and stakeholders, but failed to further address how these positions would communicate. AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical Proposal at 66. As a result, we conclude that the agency did not apply unstated evaluation criteria and find that the agency's evaluation of the protester's technical proposal under the Africa I task order factor is reasonable. Accordingly, we deny this protest ground.<sup>8</sup>

#### Factor 6: Price

The protester argues that the agency did not properly evaluate its cost proposal.<sup>9</sup> Protest at 18; Comments and Supp. Protest at 31. The agency concluded in its evaluation that it was unable to determine the probable cost of Synergy's performance with any confidence because "[m]any inconsistencies were found between the cost and technical proposals." AR, Tab 20, IPTe Report at 144. Synergy challenges the

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the protester states that the [REDACTED] manager will maintain "regular communication with the [REDACTED] [m]anager to remain consistent with program objectives and stakeholder needs." AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical Proposal at 72.

<sup>8</sup> Synergy adds to its unstated evaluation criteria allegation by contending that the agency engaged in disparate treatment, positing that "[a]s these new unstated evaluation criteria are not written down, and do not have defined limits nor grading, then logically it is not possible for the [agency] to hold each offeror to the same standards in its evaluation." Comments and Supp. Protest at 10. The agency responds that Synergy fails to provide any factual basis for this allegation and "merely speculate[s] that [the agency] 'may' have evaluated proposals differently." Req. for Partial Dismissal at 2. Our Bid Protest Regulations require protesters to present protest grounds that are factually and legally sufficient. 4 C.F.R. § 21.1(c)(4) and (f). That is, a protest must include sufficient factual bases to establish a reasonable potential that the protester's allegations may have merit; bare allegations or speculation are insufficient to meet this requirement. *Choctaw Def. Munitions, LLC*, B-420003, B-420003.2, Oct. 27, 2021, 2021 CPD ¶ 66 at 8. We agree with the agency that Synergy merely speculates that the agency could not have held each offeror's proposal to the same standard. In any event, given our conclusion, above, that the agency did not apply unstated evaluation criteria, we find that this argument is based on a faulty premise. We dismiss this ground as factually and legally insufficient.

<sup>9</sup> The protester mistakenly asserts that the agency failed to perform a "price realism" evaluation when the solicitation expressly established that the agency would perform a *cost* realism evaluation for the Africa I task order response. RFP at 97. The solicitation advised that evaluators would combine the total proposed price for the project manager task order and the probable cost for the Africa I task to arrive at a total evaluated price and evaluate that sum for price reasonableness. *Id.*

agency's evaluation, contending, for example, that the agency erroneously found that Synergy's cost proposal did not discuss a [REDACTED] subject matter expert that was included in the protester's technical approach, and did not provide labor hours corresponding to that position. *Id.* at 31.

The agency responds that it identified "numerous inconsistencies and issues" between Synergy's cost and technical proposals that prevented the agency from determining the protester's probable cost for the Africa I task order. COS/MOL at 37-38. As previously noted, the evaluators documented their conclusions that "proposed labor categories are not consistent with the proposed technical approach" and that the allocation of work between Synergy and its major subcontractor "is not clear in the technical approach as portions of the scope are shared differently in various charts, tables, and narratives."<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 37 (citing AR, Tab 20, IPTE Report at 146). In response to the protester's assertion that it did include the [REDACTED] subject matter expert in its cost proposal, the agency contends that although this information was present in an appendix "calculation support tab," it was not in the staffing plan or body of the cost proposal. Supp. COS/MOL at 49. Moreover, the agency adds that the labor hours in that appendix differ from the labor hours for the [REDACTED] subject matter expert detailed in the technical proposal. *Id.* at 49-50. The agency emphasizes that this example is only one of numerous inconsistencies that prevented it from reasonably calculating Synergy's probable cost and consequently from determining whether Synergy's total evaluated price was reasonable. *Id.* at 53.

When an agency evaluates proposals for the award of a cost-reimbursement contract,<sup>11</sup> an offeror's proposed estimated cost of contract performance is not considered controlling since, regardless of the costs proposed by the offeror, the government is bound to pay the contractor its actual and allowable costs. *Alion Sci. & Tech. Corp.*, B-410666, Jan. 22, 2015, 2015 CPD ¶ 91 at 7. Consequently, an agency must perform a cost realism analysis to determine the extent to which an offeror's proposed costs represent what the contract costs are likely to be under the offeror's unique technical approach, assuming reasonable economy and efficiency. *Id.*; see FAR §§ 15.305(a)(1), 15.404-1(d)(1).

An offeror's proposed costs should be adjusted, when appropriate, based on the results of the cost realism analysis. See FAR § 15.404-1(d)(2)(ii). Our review of an agency's cost realism evaluation is limited to determining whether the cost analysis is reasonably based and not arbitrary, and adequately documented. See *Alion Sci. & Tech. Corp.*,

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the evaluators found that certain "critical labor categories," including but not limited to the in-country facilitator, construction/installation manager, and [REDACTED] subject matter expert, were included in the technical approach but not in the cost proposal. AR, Tab 20, IPTE Report at 146.

<sup>11</sup> Here, the RFP provided for a cost realism review only for the Africa regional task order. RFP at 97.

*supra*. Agencies are not required to infer a protester's proposed costs from an inadequately detailed proposal or a proposal with conflicting cost information. See *Mission 1st Grp., Inc.*, B-414738.9, Feb. 12, 2019, 2019 CPD ¶ 80 at 5-6 (agency reasonably concluded that conflicting information in cost proposal prevented performance of realism analysis).

The record supports the agency's conclusion that inconsistencies in Synergy's proposal prevented the agency from performing a cost realism analysis. For example, the record shows that labor hours for the [REDACTED] subject matter expert position in the protester's technical and cost proposals do not match--a fact that the protester does not deny. See Supp. COS/MOL at 49-50 (citing AR, Tab 12, Synergy Cost Proposal at 262, 277-289; AR, Tab 11, Synergy Technical Proposal at 64, 66, 69-73, 76-79). Further, the RFP advised that "[i]nconsistencies between the cost proposal and other portions of the proposal could raise concerns regarding the [o]fferor's understanding of the requirements and its ability to perform the work for the proposed cost." RFP at 98. Consequently, Synergy was on notice that it ran the risk of receiving an unfavorable rating even with allegedly "mild" discrepancies between its cost proposal and other parts of its proposal. See Supp. Comments at 22. Given an offeror's responsibility to submit a well-written proposal, the protester is mistaken in its contention that the agency should have resolved the documented inconsistencies in Synergy's proposal and inferred its proposed costs. See *Mission 1st Grp., Inc.*, *supra*. Based on the record, the agency reasonably decided that Synergy's failure to submit a clear, adequately detailed proposal prevented the agency from performing a cost realism analysis. Accordingly, the protester's challenges to the agency's evaluation of the protester's cost proposal are without merit.

The protest is denied.

Edda Emmanuelli Perez  
General Counsel