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Decision

Matter of: Strategic Operational Solutions, Inc.

File: B-423026.5; B-423026.6

Date: July 22, 2025

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DIGEST

1. Protest challenging agency's evaluation of protester's key personnel proposal is denied where the record shows that the evaluation was reasonable and consistent with the solicitation.
2. Protest challenging agency's best-value tradeoff decision is denied where the agency's decision was reasonable and consistent with the terms of the solicitation, and the protester has not shown that it suffered competitive prejudice from the agency's failure to document every aspect of its comparative analysis.

DECISION

Strategic Operational Solutions, Inc. (STOPSO), a service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) of Ashburn, Virginia, protests the issuance of a task order to Teracore, Inc., an SDVOSB of Woodstock, Georgia, under request for proposals (RFP) No. 70RSAT24R00000021, issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), for data management support services. The protester contends that the agency unreasonably evaluated STOPSO's key personnel proposal and argues that the best-value tradeoff analysis was unreasonable and insufficiently documented.

We deny the protest.

BACKGROUND

The agency issued the solicitation on July 22, 2024, pursuant to the procedures of Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) subpart 16.5, to firms holding contracts under the General Services Administration's Veterans Technology Services 2 (VETS2) indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity governmentwide acquisition contract. Contracting Officer's Statement (COS) at 2; Agency Report (AR), Tab 7, Initial RFP at 2. The solicitation contemplated the issuance of a single task order on a time-and-materials basis, with an 8-month base period of performance and two 1-year option periods. AR, Tab 12, RFP amend. 3 at 5, 20.¹ The solicitation sought data management support services to assist the agency's Science and Technology Directorate, Finance and Budget Division with integrating financial, procurement, and asset management systems; providing necessary business intelligence support; and replacing the agency's outdated systems with an integrated, modern enterprise resources planning system. *Id.* at 5.

The solicitation provided for award on a best-value tradeoff basis considering five factors, listed in descending order of importance: (1) technical capabilities and understanding; (2) prior demonstrated experience; (3) management approach; (4) key personnel qualifications; and (5) price. RFP at 68. When combined, the non-price factors were significantly more important than price. *Id.* The solicitation advised that "award may be made to other than the lowest priced proposal if the Government determines that a price premium is warranted due to technical merit." *Id.*

As relevant here, under the key personnel qualifications factor, the solicitation instructed offerors to provide resumes that "clearly illustrate how each of the proposed Key Personnel meet the Offeror's VETS2 contract requirements for the specified labor category proposed." *Id.* at 63. The solicitation designated two key personnel positions of project manager and deputy project manager, with associated VETS2 labor categories of subject matter expert (SME) information technology (IT) project manager and senior IT project manager, respectively. RFP at 18. The solicitation further provided labor category descriptions and qualifications for each level (e.g., SME or senior) of contractor personnel under the VETS2 contract. *Id.* at 11-12. Offerors were informed that the agency would "assess the extent to which the Offeror identifies and commits Key Personnel with appropriate experience and qualifications" and that resumes would be evaluated "based on the currency, quality, and depth of experience of individual personnel working on similar projects (size, scope, magnitude, duration, and complexity)." *Id.* at 70.

¹ The solicitation was amended three times. Unless otherwise noted, citations to the solicitation are to the final amended version of the solicitation provided in tab 12 of the agency report. Citations to agency report documents are to the internal page numbers marked in the documents; for documents without consecutive page numbers, we cite to the Adobe PDF page numbers.

On August 13, 2024, the agency received three timely submitted proposals, including proposals from STOPSO and Teracore. COS at 3. Following the evaluation of proposals, the agency selected Teracore's proposal as representing the best value to the agency. On September 23, DHS issued the task order to Teracore.

Following a debriefing, STOPSO filed a protest with our Office, alleging that the agency's evaluation and award decision were unreasonable and inconsistent with the solicitation. See *Strategic Operational Solutions, Inc.*, B-423026 *et al.*, Dec. 23, 2024 (unpublished decision) at 1. After DHS filed the agency report, and after several additional rounds of supplemental briefing, the GAO attorney assigned to the protest held an outcome prediction alternative dispute resolution (ADR) teleconference with the parties on December 17. See 4 C.F.R. § 21.10(e). During the teleconference, the GAO attorney advised the parties that the protest would likely be sustained based on the agency's unreasonable evaluation of STOPSO's proposal under the technical capabilities factor and the prior demonstrated experience factor, its disparate treatment in the evaluation of the technical capabilities factor, and its insufficient documentation of the tradeoff decision.

In response to the ADR, the agency notified our Office that it intended to take corrective action by terminating the task order issued to Teracore, reevaluating proposals, and making a new award decision, as well as taking other corrective measures as necessary to ensure a proper award decision. Based on the agency's proposed corrective action, GAO dismissed STOPSO's protest as academic. *Strategic Operational Solutions, Inc.*, *supra*.

Following a reevaluation, the technical evaluation team (TET) assigned the following final ratings to STOPSO's and Teracore's proposals:

	STOPSO	Teracore
Technical Capabilities and Understanding	High Confidence	High Confidence
Prior Demonstrated Experience	High Confidence	High Confidence
Management Approach	High Confidence	High Confidence
Key Personnel Qualifications	Low Confidence	High Confidence
Price	\$11,947,331	\$12,016,153

AR, Tab 20, Source Selection Decision (SSD) at 2. As relevant here, the TET assigned a rating of low confidence to STOPSO's proposal under the key personnel qualifications factor based on a significant weakness assessed for STOPSO's proposed deputy project manager. In this regard, the agency found that the deputy project manager's resume failed to demonstrate the years of experience required by the solicitation. AR, Tab 19, TET Consensus Evaluation Report at 15.

The source selection authority (SSA) reviewed the technical evaluation report and concurred with the TET's findings and recommendation to make award to Teracore. AR, Tab 20, SSD at 3. In the SSD, the SSA documented a detailed "independent assessment of the overall merits of the proposals of" STOPSO and Teracore under

each evaluation factor, concurring with, or taking exception to, each strength and weakness identified by the TET. See *id.* at 3-15. In the tradeoff section, the SSA noted that Teracore and STOPSO received ratings of high confidence for both the technical capabilities and understanding factor and the demonstrated prior experience factor and concurred with those ratings. *Id.* at 16. The SSA then compared the merits of the two proposals under the other two factors (management approach and key personnel qualifications), identifying discriminators between the proposals under those factors. *Id.*

Ultimately, the SSA concluded that an award to STOPSO would result in “pay[ing] the lowest price for an overall lower technical capability and higher performance risks than Teracore” and that a “price premium of \$68,822.30 is worth Teracore’s higher technical capability and lower performance risks compared to STOPSO.” *Id.* at 16-17. The SSA further found that “Teracore’s proposal, unlike STOPSO’s proposal, includes a qualified Deputy Project Manager meeting the minimum requirements,” finding that “[t]his by itself, justifies the modest price premium for Teracore.” *Id.* at 17. Based on these findings, the SSA determined that Teracore’s proposal represented the best value to the government and again selected Teracore for award. *Id.*; AR, Tab 21, Award Memorandum at 16.

On April 14, 2025, the agency notified STOPSO of its award decision. Following the agency’s debriefing, STOPSO timely filed this protest.

DISCUSSION

STOPSO argues that the agency unreasonably evaluated its proposal under the key personnel qualifications factor. Protest at 17-29; Comments & Supp. Protest at 18-25. The protester also contends that the agency conducted a flawed and inadequately documented best-value tradeoff analysis. Comments & Supp. Protest at 25-30; Supp. Comments at 11-18. The agency responds that it reasonably evaluated STOPSO’s proposed key personnel and conducted a thorough and well-documented best-value tradeoff. Memorandum of Law (MOL) at 4-16; Supp. MOL at 2-24. As discussed below, we have considered STOPSO’s arguments and find no basis to sustain the protest.²

Key Personnel Evaluation

The protester argues that the agency’s assessment of a significant weakness based on the experience provided for STOPSO’s proposed deputy project manager was unreasonable and inconsistent with the solicitation’s evaluation criteria. In this regard,

² The protester initially raised several additional challenges to the agency’s evaluation of proposals. See Protest at 20-28. After reviewing the agency report, which substantively addressed those protest grounds, see MOL at 16-27, the protester stated that it “elects to pursue only those protest grounds and supplemental protest grounds discussed” in its comments and supplemental protest. Comments & Supp. Protest at 17 n.4. Thus, we consider these additional challenges to be withdrawn.

the protester contends that the agency applied an unstated evaluation criterion when it determined that STOPSO's proposed deputy project manager was required to have 15 years of relevant experience. Protest at 17-29; Comments & Supp. Protest at 18-25. The protester also asserts that its proposal nevertheless included information showing that its proposed deputy project manager was a qualified senior contractor with over 15 years of experience. *Id.* Based on our review of the record, we find no merit to the protester's arguments.

The evaluation of proposals in a task order competition conducted pursuant to FAR subpart 16.5, as here, is primarily a matter within the contracting agency's discretion because the agency is responsible for defining its needs and the best method of accommodating them. *CACI, Inc.-Fed.*, B-420441.3, Nov. 5, 2022, 2022 CPD ¶ 278 at 6. When reviewing protests of an award in a task order competition, we do not reevaluate proposals, but examine the record to determine whether the evaluation and source selection decision are reasonable and consistent with the solicitation's evaluation criteria and applicable procurement laws and regulations. *DynCorp Int'l LLC*, B-411465, B-411465.2, Aug. 4, 2015, 2015 CPD ¶ 228 at 7. A protester's disagreement with an agency's judgment, by itself, is not sufficient to establish that the agency acted unreasonably. *CACI, Inc.-Fed.*, *supra*.

Here, the agency assigned a significant weakness based on STOPSO's proposal of a deputy project manager whose resume did "not demonstrate the required years of experience." AR, Tab 19, TET Consensus Evaluation Report at 11. In assigning this significant weakness, the TET noted that the solicitation required contractor personnel at a senior-level labor category to have "a master's degree or higher, or 15 years of work experience," but the resume of STOPSO's proposed deputy project manager--a senior IT project manager--did not meet this requirement. *Id.* In this regard, the agency found that, while the resume provided a summary statement that the proposed deputy project manager is "[l]everaging over 19 years of professional experience," the employment history listed in the resume "only demonstrates 11 years of experience with actual start and end dates for each employment period going back to 2013." AR, Tab 20, SSD at 16; see AR, Tab 13, STOPSO's Technical Proposal at 36-38.

Objecting to this evaluation conclusion, the protester first argues that the solicitation did not require the resume of the proposed deputy project manager to detail 15 years of experience, and that the agency unreasonably conflated two separate solicitation requirements. Protest at 17-20. Specifically, the protester contends that the 15-year requirement for personnel in senior-level labor categories is a VETS2 contract-level requirement, which should be treated as separate from the evaluation criteria under the key personnel qualifications factor. *Id.* In this regard, the protester asserts that the evaluation criteria for this factor stated only that the "proposed key person should have the education, certification, expertise, and knowledge necessary to produce the level of work required in the [statement of work]" without specifying a required length for such experience. *Id.* at 18; see RFP at 70. The protester also contends that the solicitation advised that resumes would be "evaluated based on the currency, quality, and depth of experience of individual personnel working on similar projects (size, scope, magnitude,

duration, and complexity),” and that the evaluation criteria said nothing about the years of experience required for the labor category. Comments & Supp. Protest at 19-25; see RFP at 11-12, 63. The protester notes that the labor category requirements are found in the *statement of work* section of the solicitation, and that the requirement to include start and end dates for each employment period provided in a resume is in the *instructions* section of the solicitation. Comments & Supp. Protest at 21-25; see RFP at 70. The protester therefore argues that “nothing in the Solicitation required a key personnel resume to include a year-by-year accounting of the entirety of a candidate’s work history” and that the *evaluation criteria* did not “require a demonstration of 15 years of experience *relevant to the task order [statement of work]*.” *Id.* at 21.

Where a dispute exists as to a solicitation’s actual requirements, we will first examine the plain language of the solicitation. *DAI Global, LLC*, B-416992, Jan. 17, 2019, 2019 CPD ¶ 25 at 4. Where a protester and agency disagree over the meaning of solicitation language, we will resolve the matter by reading the solicitation as a whole and in a manner that gives effect to all of its provisions; to be reasonable, and therefore valid, an interpretation must be consistent with the solicitation when read as a whole and in a reasonable manner. *Crew Training Int’l, Inc.*, B-414126, Feb. 7, 2017, 2017 CPD ¶ 53 at 4. A proposed interpretation of solicitation language would be unreasonable insofar as it would render other solicitation language superfluous. See *Anders Constr., Inc.*, B-414261, Apr. 11, 2017, 2017 CPD ¶ 121 at 3-4.

Here, the protester’s position--that the solicitation did not require key personnel resumes to demonstrate the minimum education and experience levels required for the applicable labor category--directly contradicts the plain language of the solicitation. As the protester notes, the solicitation provided for the evaluation of key personnel resumes for experience with work relevant to the statement of work. However, it also expressly required those same resumes to include “[s]tart and end dates . . . for each employment period” and to “clearly illustrate how each of the proposed Key Personnel meet the Offeror’s VETS 2 contract requirements for the specified labor category proposed.” RFP at 63. As noted above, the solicitation designated the labor category of senior IT project manager for the proposed deputy project manager, thus requiring a master’s degree or higher education level and/or at least 15 years of experience for that key position. *Id.* at 11-12, 18. This solicitation requirement was not rendered superfluous by the fact that it was set out in sections other than the evaluation criteria section.

Moreover, we also find that evaluating the key person resume for compliance with the experience requirement of the specified labor category was not inconsistent with the stated evaluation criteria, which provided for the agency to “assess the extent to which the Offeror identifies and commits Key Personnel with appropriate experience and qualifications.” *Id.* at 70. While the evaluation criteria section of the solicitation did not define what constitutes “appropriate” experience and qualifications, it directed offers to the statement of work for that information, providing that the “proposed key person should have the education, certification, expertise, and knowledge necessary to produce the level of work required in the [statement of work].” *Id.* The statement of

work, in turn, provided detailed requirements for each required key position, including the requirement for the deputy project manager to meet the experience and qualifications for the senior IT project manager labor category (*i.e.*, a master's degree and/or more than 15 years of experience). *Id.* at 11-12, 18.³

On this record, we find that the solicitation unambiguously required the resume of the proposed deputy project manager to demonstrate a master's degree level of education or 15 years of experience. We therefore find no basis to object to the agency's assignment of a significant weakness for STOPSO's failure to demonstrate how its proposed deputy project manager met this requirement. Moreover, given the solicitation's express instructions for the resume to include start and end dates for each employment period to "clearly illustrate" how the proposed key person meets the labor category requirements, we find reasonable the agency's reliance on those dates rather than the unsupported summary statement in STOPSO's proposal representing more than 15 years of experience. *Id.* at 63; see AR, Tab 13, STOPSO's Technical Proposal at 36.

It is an offeror's responsibility to submit a well-written proposal, with adequately detailed information which allows a meaningful review by the procuring agency. *Peraton, Inc.*, B-417088, B-417088.2, Feb. 6, 2019, 2019 CPD ¶ 190 at 14. An offeror bears the risk that the agency will find its proposal unacceptable where it fails to demonstrate compliance with all of a solicitation's requirements. *ManTech Advanced Sys. Int'l, Inc.*, B-413717, Dec. 16, 2016, 2016 CPD ¶ 370 at 5, 7. Here, STOPSO's proposal failed to include the information necessary to demonstrate its key person's compliance with the solicitation requirement. Accordingly, we find no basis to question the agency's assessment of a significant weakness for this aspect of STOPSO's proposal.

Tradeoff Decision

Next, the protester argues that the agency's tradeoff decision improperly failed to conduct a comparative analysis of STOPSO's and Teracore's proposals under the two most important factors, technical capabilities and prior experience. Comments & Supp. Protest at 25-30; Supp. Comments at 11-17. In addition, the protester asserts that the agency's tradeoff failed to give proper weight to each factor in accordance with the solicitation by basing the selection decision solely on discriminators found in the less

³ We also reject the protester's assertion that "appropriate" experience is comprised only of experience "working on similar projects (size, scope, magnitude, duration, and complexity)" for some lesser time period. Comments & Supp. Protest at 23-24, *quoting* RFP at 70. The protester's interpretation ignores the first part of the sentence it quotes in support of its position, which provides that resumes would be evaluated "based on the currency, quality, and *depth of experience of individual personnel*" working on similar projects. RFP at 70 (emphasis added). In this regard, the protester fails to articulate why it was unreasonable for the agency to use the requirements set out in the statement of work to assess the "depth of experience" required for the deputy project manager.

important factors of management approach and key personnel qualifications. *Id.* The protester also contends that the agency's tradeoff analysis failed to consider the TET's negative critique of the awardee's transition plan under the technical capabilities factor. Comments & Supp. Protest at 30; Supp. Comments at 18.

The agency responds that the SSA conducted a thorough, detailed, and complete review of the competing proposals and documented her qualitative analysis under each evaluation factor to determine which proposal represented the best value to the agency. Supp. MOL at 2-23. The agency further argues that the SSA properly limited the comparative discussion under the SSD's tradeoff analysis section to the discriminators between the two proposals, none of which were found under the technical capabilities and prior demonstrated experience factors. *Id.*

Where, as here, a procurement provides for issuance of a task order on a best-value tradeoff basis, it is the function of the selection official to perform a price/technical tradeoff, that is, to determine whether one proposal's technical superiority is worth its higher price. *Lumen Techs. Gov't Sols., Inc.*, B-420945 *et al.*, Nov. 16, 2022, 2022 CPD ¶ 301 at 13. An agency has broad discretion in making a tradeoff between price and non-price factors, and the extent to which one may be sacrificed for the other is governed only by the tests of rationality and consistency with the solicitation's stated evaluation criteria. *CACI, Inc.-Federal*, *supra* at 12. In this regard, FAR part 16 requires that agencies document the basis for award and the rationale for any tradeoffs among price and non-price considerations in making the award decision. FAR 16.505(b)(7). However, there is no need for extensive documentation of every consideration factored into a tradeoff decision; rather, the documentation need only be sufficient to establish that the agency was aware of the relative merits and costs of the competing proposals and that the source selection was reasonably based. *Id.*; *Ironclad Tech. Servs., LLC*, B-419976.2, May 2, 2022, 2022 CPD ¶ 104 at 5.

Here, the record reflects that the SSA was aware of the relative merits of STOPSO's and Teracore's proposals and reasonably determined that Teracore's technical merit warranted the price premium. As an initial matter, the contemporaneous documents show that the TET reviewed and documented the evaluation of technical proposals under every evaluation factor. AR, Tab 19, TET Consensus Evaluation Report at 9-16. The SSA then not only reviewed the TET's findings, but also conducted an independent assessment of the relative merits of proposals under each evaluation factor. *See, e.g.*, AR, Tab 20, SSD at 5-6 (noting where the SSA disagreed with weaknesses assessed by the TET). In the tradeoff analysis, the SSA documented the aspects of each proposal that led her to conclude that Teracore's proposal was superior to STOPSO's, including the significant weakness assessed for STOPSO's deputy project manager, which the SSA found justified, "by itself," Teracore's "modest price premium" of \$68,822 (or approximately 0.6 percent). *Id.* at 16-17.

While the protester correctly points out that the tradeoff narrative did not specifically compare STOPSO's and Teracore's technical capabilities and experience, the SSA documented her careful and independent consideration of the underlying qualitative

merits of each proposal under each of the factors just pages before the tradeoff section of the SSD. See *id.* at 4-9. Although the tradeoff analysis only documented its comparison of discriminators for the management approach and key personnel factors, the contemporaneous record unambiguously demonstrates that the SSA was aware of the relative merits of STOPSO's and Teracore's proposals under all non-price factors, including technical capabilities and experience, in reaching the award decision. As discussed below, we see no reason why the agency was required to, in effect, repeat information contained earlier in the same document to explain why the agency found no further discriminators in areas where both proposals were equally rated, particularly in light of the modest price premium and "Teracore's higher technical capability and lower performance risk compared to STOPSO." *Id.* at 17.

As noted, there is no requirement that the agency document every consideration factored into its tradeoff decision; only that the documentation establish that the agency was aware of the relative merits and costs of the competing proposals and that the source selection was reasonably based. See *Ironclad Tech. Servs., LLC, supra*. Moreover, there is no requirement that a tradeoff decision include a detailed comparison of proposals under each evaluation factor; it need only identify the differences between the proposals that are of significance for purposes of the tradeoff. *Emergint Techs., Inc.*, B-408410.3, Apr. 4, 2014, 2014 CPD ¶ 123 at 6. In this regard, an agency, in making its tradeoff analysis, may ultimately focus on a particular discriminator, even if the discriminator is not from one of the most heavily weighted factors, where it has a reasonable basis to do so. *AlliantCorps, LLC*, B-415744.5, B-415744.6, Nov. 23, 2018, 2018 CPD ¶ 399 at 5-6.

Here, since the agency reasonably found that only STOPSO's proposal contained a significant weakness (a significant weakness that resulted in the assessment of the lowest adjectival rating under one of the factors), it was reasonable for the agency to use this consideration as a discriminator for award purposes. See, e.g., *IBM Corp.*, B-415798, Mar. 27, 2018, 2018 CPD ¶ 130 at 8 (finding that an agency reasonably considered a protester's weakness under one evaluation factor as a discriminator for award purposes because even a single weakness may provide the key discriminator in making an award decision). Therefore, the record supports the agency's conclusion that the benefit offered by Teracore's qualified deputy project manager, as well as a more specific and detailed management approach (which the protester did not challenge), merited the modest price premium. See AR, Tab 20, SSD at 17. Accordingly, we find no basis to question the agency's best-value determination.

In any case, even if we were to conclude that the agency's tradeoff analysis was inadequate for failing to document a side-by-side comparison of STOPSO's and Teracore's proposals under every evaluation factor, it is not clear that the protester can show a reasonable possibility of competitive prejudice. In this regard, the agency assessed Teracore's proposal the highest possible rating of high confidence under all four non-price factors, while STOPSO's proposal was assessed a rating of high confidence under the first three factors (technical capabilities; experience; and

management approach) but the lowest possible rating of low confidence for the key personnel qualifications factor. AR, Tab 20, SSD at 2.

As discussed above, we conclude that the agency's assessment of a significant weakness, which formed the basis for the low confidence rating, was reasonable. See *id.* at 15 ("I concur with the TET's rating of 'low' confidence for STOPSO under Factor 4, Key Personnel Qualifications. The failure of the Deputy Project Manager candidate to meet the minimum requirements of the RFP is a significant weakness."). We also note that the protester has not demonstrated that the agency otherwise erred in its underlying technical evaluation. Considering that the evaluation criteria provided that the non-price factors, when combined, were significantly more important than price, and that the price premium at issue was less than 1 percent, we see no reasonable possibility that a more fulsome best-value tradeoff would have resulted in a different conclusion. Competitive prejudice is an essential element of every viable protest; where, as here, the record establishes no reasonable possibility of prejudice, we will not sustain a protest even if a defect in the procurement is found. See *ORBIS Sibro, Inc.*, B-417406.2; B-417406.3, Nov. 19, 2019, 2019 CPD ¶ 404 at 13.

To the extent the protester argues that it was competitively prejudiced because the agency's comparison of proposals under the technical capabilities and experience factors would have identified significant discriminators outweighing the significant weakness assessed for STOPSO's key personnel, we do not find the protester's arguments persuasive. For example, the protester argues that the TET's assessment of a strength under the technical capabilities factor for "STOPSO's incumbent experience and familiarity with the DHS program" is a significant benefit that should have been recognized as a discriminator. Comments & Supp. Protest at 28, *citing*, AR, Tab 19, TET Consensus Evaluation Report at 8 ("[STOPSO's] plan also illustrated the Offeror familiarity and understanding of DHS [Science & Technology's] systems and processes."). The record shows, however, that the agency also assessed Teracore's proposal a strength for an approach that "leverages the DHS [financial system modernization (FSM)] Toolkit," that was "developed based on Teracore's incumbent experience with DHS." Supp. MOL at 19, *citing* AR, Tab 19, TET Consensus Evaluation Report at 12; AR, Tab 22, Teracore's Technical Proposal at 2 ("Informed by the above [prior DHS contract] efforts and taking over from incumbents on multiple program components, we have assembled a full set of processes, tools, and Plans we call *Team Teracore DHS FSM Toolkit*."). Accordingly, we see no basis to find that the agency erred by not identifying STOPSO's incumbent familiarity with DHS systems as a tradeoff discriminator.

Finally, we find no merit to the protester's argument that the tradeoff analysis improperly overlooked a flaw in the awardee's transition plan. Comments & Supp. Protest at 30; Supp. Comments at 18. In this regard, the TET documented an "[o]bservation" among seven strengths and one weakness identified in Teracore's proposal under the technical capabilities factor, noting that Teracore's "Transition Plan In and Out is clear but missing information as to how the transition will actually happen including putting team together." AR, Tab 19, TET Consensus Evaluation Report at 12. We find no basis to

object to the SSA's failure to discuss this observation in her independent assessment and tradeoff. See *generally*, AR, Tab 20, SSD at 6-7.

As noted above, an agency is not required to document the consideration of every strength and weakness associated with offerors proposals, as long as the documentation is sufficient to establish that the agency was aware of the relative merits and costs of the competing proposals and that the source selection was reasonably based. See *CACI, Inc.-Federal, supra* at 13 (finding that a FAR subpart 16.5 procurement does not require a point-by-point comparison of each strength and weakness associated with the proposals). Despite the protester's characterization of the observation as a "negative critique" of Teracore's transition plan, see Comments & Supp. Protest at 30, the TET noted its remark as neither a strength nor a weakness, but as an "Observation," and included it at the end of a detailed description of seven strengths and one weakness in Teracore's technical capabilities proposal. See AR, Tab 19, TET Consensus Evaluation Report at 12. We see no basis to conclude that the SSA was required to consider this evaluative observation in her tradeoff, where neither the TET nor the SSA considered the observation significant enough to rise to the level of a weakness.

The protest is denied.

Edda Emmanuelli Perez
General Counsel