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Decision

Matter of: SupplyCore, Inc.

File: B-424243; B-424243.2

Date: April 9, 2026

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Luke W. Meier, Esq., and Oliver Jury, Esq., Blank Rome LLP, for Amentum Services, Inc., the intervenor.

Michael C. Evans, Esq., General Services Administration, for the agency.

Todd C. Culliton, Esq., and Tania Calhoun, Esq., Office of the General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

Protest that the agency unreasonably evaluated proposals is denied where the record shows the evaluation was reasonable and consistent with the terms of the solicitation and applicable procurement statutes and regulations.

DECISION

SupplyCore, Inc., of Rockford, Illinois, protests the award of an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract to Amentum Services, Inc., of Chantilly, Virginia, under request for proposals (RFP) No. 47QSCC24R0021, issued by the General Services Administration (GSA) for logistics operations solutions support services in Japan. SupplyCore argues that the agency unreasonably evaluated its proposal.

We deny the protest.

BACKGROUND

On May 13, 2025, GSA issued the RFP, using the policies and procedures set forth in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) parts 12 and 15, to procure logistics operations solutions support services. Agency Report (AR), exh. 2, RFP, amend. 3 at 4.¹ The contractor will provide a total global supply solution for federal and Department of

¹ Citations to the AR reference the Adobe PDF page numbers.

Defense customers in the Indo-Pacific Command Japan Area of Responsibility covering a broad range of commercial supply items, such as office supplies, tools, hardware, housewares, and cleaning products. *Id.* The contractor will source, warehouse, and deliver commodities within three to five days for orders placed in Japan and five to seven business days for orders originating in Okinawa. *Id.* at 6.

The RFP contemplated the award of a fixed-price IDIQ contract to be performed over a 1-year base period and four 1-year option periods. RFP, amend. 3 at 5-6. Award was to be made on a best-value tradeoff basis considering price and non-price factors. RFP, amend. 3 at 96-97. Non-price factors, in descending order of importance, were: (1) technical excellence and capabilities; (2) operational quality assurance; (3) past performance; (4) small business utilization; and (5) live test demonstration. *Id.* at 97. When combined, the non-price factors were significantly more important than price; however, price would increase in importance as the non-price factors become more closely rated. *Id.* at 98.

Prior to the June 20 close of the solicitation period, SupplyCore, Amentum, and a third offeror submitted proposals. Contracting Officer’s Statement (COS) at 4. The agency’s evaluation produced the following relevant results:

	SupplyCore	Amentum
Technical Excellence and Capabilities	Good	Good
Operational Quality Assurance	Acceptable	Outstanding
Past Performance	Very Relevant	Relevant
Small Business Utilization	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Live Test Demonstration	Outstanding	Outstanding
Proposed Price	\$81,384,954	\$77,780,735

AR, exh. 7, Price and Best Value Determination (PBVD) at 31-32. In conducting the best-value tradeoff analysis, the source selection authority (SSA) compared the underlying merit of the proposals under each factor. *Id.* at 33-45. The SSA determined that SupplyCore’s proposal was “slightly more beneficial” under the technical excellence and capabilities factor and demonstrated a better record of past performance due to its status as the incumbent contractor. *Id.* at 43-44. Amentum’s proposal was evaluated as “significantly more beneficial” under the operational quality assurance factor because it was evaluated as having two unique strengths while SupplyCore demonstrated only an adequate approach. *Id.* at 41-42, 44. The SSA considered both proposals to be equivalent under the small business utilization and live test demonstration factors. *Id.* at 44. Ultimately, the SSA judged that both proposals were very closely rated under the technical factors, determined that price would be more significant, and concluded that

Amentum's proposal represented the better value due to its lower proposed price. *Id.* at 44-45.

On January 20, 2026, GSA informed SupplyCore that its proposal was unsuccessful. After receiving a debriefing, this protest followed.

DISCUSSION

SupplyCore raises multiple allegations challenging the conduct of the acquisition. Principally, SupplyCore argues that GSA unreasonably evaluated its proposal under the operational quality assurance and the technical excellence and capabilities factors. Protest at 9-16. SupplyCore also asserts that GSA unreasonably conducted the tradeoff analysis because it relied on flawed evaluations.

We have reviewed all SupplyCore's challenges and find that none provide us with a basis to sustain the protest. We discuss the principal allegations below. At the outset, we note that, when reviewing an agency's evaluation of proposals and selection decision, it is not our role to reevaluate submissions; rather, we examine the supporting record to determine whether the evaluation and selection decision were reasonable, consistent with the solicitation, and adequately documented. *Manutek, Inc.*, B-423476.2, B-423476.4, Jan. 8, 2026, at 3-4.

Operational Quality Assurance

SupplyCore contends that the agency unreasonably evaluated its proposal because it failed to document its evaluation sufficiently and did not identify certain features as strengths. See Comments & Supp. Protest at 4-16. GSA responds that it reasonably evaluated the firm's proposal.

By way of additional background, offerors were instructed to demonstrate their understanding of the staffing requirements and ability to manage and staff personnel who can "provide high-quality seamless operations." RFP, amend. 3 at 84. The RFP required offerors to discuss eight components of their approach: (1) the qualifications of their technical staff; (2) their operational structure and how different organizational components coordinate; (3) how the offeror will ensure quality of the products delivered; (4) how the offeror will ensure the quality assurance surveillance plan (QSAP) is followed and requisite metrics are satisfied; (5) demonstrate that assigned employees can complete all tasks; (6) how the contractor will meet Service Contract Act standards; (7) how it will meet applicable minimum wage requirements; and, (8) a subcontracting plan. *Id.* at 84-85.

When evaluating proposals under this factor, the agency would consider each offeror's quality of approach and demonstrated understanding of the requirement. RFP, amend. 3 at 98-99. The agency would then assign an adjectival rating--outstanding, good, acceptable, or unacceptable--that most closely reflected its assessment. *Id.* at 98-99. Relevant here, the RFP defined a strength as "[a]n aspect of a proposal that

would positively impact performance of the resulting contract, exceed the minimum requirements, or otherwise benefit the Government. Also, may contain enhancing features that provide supply or service above and beyond what is called for that benefit the Government.” *Id.* at 99.

The evaluators assigned SupplyCore’s proposal a rating of “acceptable,” concluding that it demonstrated an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements. AR, exh. 4, Evaluation Summary at 76, 81. The evaluators considered SupplyCore’s proposal under each of the eight components and noted how the firm’s proposal satisfied those requirements. *Id.* at 76-81. For example, regarding the qualifications of technical staff, the evaluators recorded their consideration of each proposed staff member’s qualifications and experience. *Id.* at 76-77. Similarly, for the operational structure component, the evaluators explained SupplyCore’s approach to coordinating and integrating organizational components and how the firm sets roles and responsibilities for each department. *Id.* at 77. As a third example, the evaluators explained how SupplyCore will maintain the quality of products delivered by employing [DELETED] and [DELETED]. *Id.* at 78-79.

As noted above, SupplyCore challenges the agency’s documentation of the evaluation record and the underappreciation of several features. We discuss them separately.

Documentation of the Evaluation

SupplyCore argues that GSA failed to document its evaluation because the record lacks any discussion showing why the firm’s approach was merely adequate. It contends that GSA simply restated the content of SupplyCore’s proposal and then nakedly concluded that the content met the minimum requirements without any accompanying analysis. Comments & Supp. Protest at 6-7, 9 (citing *Island Peer Review Organization, Inc., d/b/a IPRO*, B-417297.2, Sept. 12, 2025). SupplyCore argues that *Island Peer Review Organization, Inc., d/b/a IPRO* requires an agency to document specifically why proposal features merely satisfy requirements and do not constitute strengths in order to demonstrate that the agency exercised “evaluative judgment.” *Id.* at 6; *see also* Supp. Comments at 11-12. GSA responds that the evaluation record shows that it reasonably documented the technical analysis. Memorandum of Law (MOL) at 2.

FAR 15.305(a) requires the agency to document the relative strengths, deficiencies, significant weaknesses, and risks identified which form the basis of the evaluation. Further, contracting agencies are required to document adequately their evaluation results. *Consultech Envtl., LLC*, B-416003, May 4, 2018, at 4. In this regard, our Office has long stated that “an agency is not required to document all determinations of adequacy or explain why a proposal did not receive a strength, weakness, or deficiency for a particular item.” *See, e.g., Spry Methods, Inc.; Castalia Sys., LLC*; B-421640.3 *et al.*, Apr. 17, 2024, at 12.

In *Island Peer Review Organization, Inc. d/b/a IPRO*, the protester, IPRO, challenged the issuance of a task order by the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers

for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to another firm for healthcare quality improvement services. *Island Peer Review Organization, Inc. d/b/a IPRO, supra* at 1. As one of its challenges, IPRO alleged that CMS unreasonably evaluated the awardee as an eligible healthcare quality improvement organization (QIO) because the awardee was an unpopulated joint venture without any employees. *Id.* at 5. To be considered an eligible QIO, each offeror was required to demonstrate that it had certain organizational structures, such as having a governing body with individuals representing healthcare organizations and consumers. *Id.* at 5, 5 n.9.

After reviewing the record, our Office sustained the challenge. We considered that the awardee's proposal was unclear as to how its organizational structure satisfied the QIO eligibility requirements; indeed, we noted that the firm's proposal represented that it was a joint venture with eight subcontractors and that its key personnel were employed by its subcontractors. *Island Peer Review Organization, Inc. d/b/a IPRO, supra* at 6. This structure seemed at odds with the agency's evaluation judgment that the awardee demonstrated the requisite organizational structure, which simply quoted "presumably" relevant text from the awardee's proposal purporting to show that the awardee satisfied the requirements. *Id.* Ultimately, we sustained the allegation because our review of the record demonstrated that the evaluation judgments were not facially supported by the excerpted text and the agency failed to include any analysis bridging that gap. *Id.* at 8. Additionally, our Office requested that the agency provide a post-protest explanation explaining how the excerpted text supported the agency's evaluation judgments; however, the agency could not reasonably explain how it found the awardee eligible when the firm's proposal had specifically stated that the firm was an unpopulated joint venture with member organizations performing as subcontractors. *Id.*

Here, in contrast, GSA reasonably documented its evaluation. As noted above, the record shows that the agency reviewed relevant portions of the protester's proposal and compared that material to the solicitation requirements. For example, the staff member qualifications and experience component required each offeror to identify the location of technical staff and include resumes for technical staff in charge of sourcing items. RFP, amend. 3 at 84. GSA determined that SupplyCore met this requirement because its proposal provided this information, such as identifying that its program manager is located in [DELETED], serves as the [DELETED], and has [DELETED]. AR, exh. 4, Evaluation Summary at 77.

As another example, the operational structure component required each offeror to provide a narrative describing how various organizational components will work together in a coordinated manner to ensure successful accomplishment of the mission. RFP at 84. The record shows that the agency considered SupplyCore's proposal as meeting this requirement because it explained how its organizational structure is designed to ensure seamless coordination between various departments through [DELETED]. AR, exh. 4, Evaluation Summary at 77.

After considering the totality of SupplyCore's proposal and its demonstrated capabilities under each of the eight components, the record shows that the evaluators determined

that none of the features qualified as strengths or weaknesses; rather, the evaluators determined that these features simply met the solicitation's requirements. AR, exh. 4, Evaluation Summary at 81. In our view, this amount of documentation is sufficient because it shows what material GSA considered germane to each component and demonstrates that it did not consider any of the material presented as warranting a strength or weakness. As a result, we can determine whether the agency's judgments are consistent with the terms of the solicitation and the material contained in SupplyCore's proposal.

While SupplyCore argues that the evaluation record is insufficient because it does not contain any analysis as to why none of the material was evaluated as a strength, we note that an agency is not required to document reasons for why a proposal was evaluated as adequate or why strengths or weaknesses were not assigned. See *Spry Methods, Inc., supra*. Further, we disagree with SupplyCore that our decision in *Island Peer Review Organization, Inc. d/b/a IPRO* requires an agency to document its reasons for determining why a proposal feature is merely adequate. Instead, the issue in *Island Peer Review Organization, Inc. d/b/a IPRO* related to the fact that the excerpted text did not appear relevant to or otherwise support the agency's conclusions, which necessitated some analysis or further explanation to bridge that gap. In contrast, the evaluation here shows that GSA considered obviously relevant portions of the firm's proposal to determine that SupplyCore addressed and satisfied the solicitation requirements. No further documentation was required. Accordingly, we deny the protest allegation.

Reasonableness of the Evaluation

SupplyCore also argues that GSA unreasonably failed to assign strengths to its proposal. First, SupplyCore contends that the agency's evaluation was internally inconsistent because the agency recognized that the firm's operational quality assurance approach "*presents positive merits*," yet did not assign the firm's proposal any strengths. Comments & Supp. Protest at 10. Second, SupplyCore identifies several features that it argues should have been identified as strengths, including the firm's established [DELETED]. *Id.* at 12-16. GSA responds it considered the firm's approach and concluded that it demonstrated ability to provide high-quality operations as required by the solicitation but did not present any unique features qualifying as strengths. MOL at 4-6.

As additional context for SupplyCore's first argument, the agency evaluators summarized the firm's evaluation as follows:

SupplyCore's proposal meets requirements and indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements outlined in the RFP. SupplyCore had no strengths, weaknesses or deficiencies. SupplyCore's proposal presents positive merits under any resultant contract. The proposal's aspects have little potential to cause disruption of schedule, increased cost or degradation of performance. Normal government

monitoring will likely be able to overcome any difficulties. SupplyCore's risk of unsuccessful contract performance associated with their proposal for Factor 2 is no worse than moderate.

AR, exh. 4, Evaluation Summary at 88. The SSA repeats the agency's position that SupplyCore's approach "presents positive merits" in the PBVD. AR, exh. 7, PBVD at 27, 36, 42.

After reviewing GSA's evaluation, we reject SupplyCore's contention that a finding of "presents positive merits" was inconsistent with a finding of no strengths. Rather, consistent with GSA's position, we read the evaluation to simply mean that the agency found SupplyCore's general approach favorable but that no individual feature positively impacted performance such that the assignment of a strength was warranted. Thus, we see nothing about the evaluation that demonstrates an internal inconsistency. Accordingly, we deny the protest allegation.

Moreover, even if we agreed with the protester that the agency unreasonably failed to assign certain features demonstrating "positive merits" as "strengths," we still would not sustain the protest. Competitive prejudice is an essential element of any viable protest, and where none is shown or otherwise evident, we will not sustain a protest, even where a protester may have shown that an agency's actions were improper. *NTT Data Servs. Fed. Gov't, LLC*, B-421708.3, B-421708.4, Nov. 27, 2023, at 4 n.3. While the protester asserts that this error resulted in competitive prejudice because it could have increased its adjectival rating from "acceptable" to "outstanding," we note that adjectival ratings are merely guides for intelligent decision-making. *SOS Int'l, LLC*, B-423516, B-423516.2, July 29, 2025, at 11. The essence of the evaluation is reflected in the evaluation record, and the only thing that matters is whether the agency reasonably recognized and considered the underlying merit. *Id.* at 12. Thus, whether GSA specifically identified the "positive merits" as strengths and assigned an "outstanding" rating is inconsequential because the fact of the matter is the agency already considered those features when comparing proposals as part of the tradeoff analysis.

Next, we address SupplyCore's allegation that seven features in its proposal should have been identified as strengths. GSA responds that it considered these features and concluded that they did not constitute strengths. MOL at 5. As support, GSA provides a declaration from its technical evaluators and SSA.² AR, exh. 5, Decl. from Technical Evaluation Team (TET) and SSA at 1-11. GSA further responds that the allegation amounts to mere disagreement with the agency's evaluation judgment. MOL at 5. We

² While we accord greater weight to contemporaneous evidence, GAO considers post-protest explanations that provide a rationale for contemporaneous conclusions, so long as they are credible and consistent with the contemporaneous evaluation judgments. *Altavian, Inc.*, B-417701, B-417701.2, Sept. 17, 2019, at 6 n.4. Here, the post-protest explanations are credible and consistent with the contemporaneous evaluation record because they explain why the proposal was simply considered adequate, which, as noted above, were not required to be documented.

have reviewed SupplyCore's allegation and do not find that the agency unreasonably evaluated any of the features. We discuss illustrative examples below.

First, SupplyCore argues that its established [DELETED] and management experience with [DELETED] should have been evaluated as a strength because these features demonstrate ability to provide high-quality seamless operations, successful coordination of organizational components, ability to deliver products, and generally reduce operational risks. Comments & Supp. Protest at 12-13. Second, SupplyCore argues that it proposed a [DELETED] which materially decreases performance risk and exceeds performance specifications. *Id.* at 13. Third, SupplyCore argues that it proposed a [DELETED], and therefore, its system exceeds performance requirements. *Id.* at 13-14.

The evaluators respond to each of the alleged strengths. Regarding SupplyCore's [DELETED], agency evaluators explain that these features simply demonstrated that the firm could perform but did not demonstrate any unique ability to exceed performance requirements. AR, exh. 5, Decl. of TET and SSA at 1-2. Indeed, the agency evaluators explain that SupplyCore's proposal did not demonstrate any additional value because the firm failed to explain precisely how it would coordinate with the agency to ensure that any deliver order [DELETED]. *Id.* at 2. The agency evaluators also explain that [DELETED] is not valuable because [DELETED] are subject to [DELETED]. *Id.* The SSA adds that the [DELETED] is not valuable because the agency does not require [DELETED] but rather requires such capacity within 120 days of performance. *Id.* at 3.

As for SupplyCore's alleged [DELETED], the evaluators explain that the RFP requires offerors to maintain sufficient personnel and integrated quality controls to ensure compliance with the quality assurance surveillance plan, and the firm's description of its quality assurance organization aligns with that requirement. AR, exh. 5, Decl. of TET and SSA at 4. The SSA explains that the protester's organization satisfies the requirement but did not provide any enhanced benefit. *Id.*

For SupplyCore's [DELETED], the evaluators explain that the RFP did not provide that [DELETED] would warrant the assignment of a strength. AR, exh. 5, Decl. of TET and SSA at 5. Further, the evaluators explain that SupplyCore's [DELETED]. *Id.* The SSA explains that the [DELETED] demonstrate a general ability to meet quality assurance requirements but did not offer any particular advantage to this requirement. *Id.*

On this record, we have no basis to object to the agency's decision not to assign strengths for these features. As noted, the record shows that the agency thoroughly recognized and considered each of these features, and determined that they were not particularly advantageous, largely because the features were either not relevant or did not provide any special benefit. While SupplyCore may contend that the features necessarily provide unique benefits to performance, such arguments merely disagree with the agency's evaluation judgments and do not provide a valid bases for protest. *FreeAlliance.com, LLC*, B-420345.3, B-420345.4, Feb. 10, 2023, at 3 (disagreement

with the agency's evaluation judgments does not establish that the evaluation was unreasonable). Accordingly, we deny the protest allegation.

Technical Excellence and Capabilities

SupplyCore principally argues that GSA unreasonably concluded that its proposal lacked supporting documentation confirming its warehouse lease agreement. The protester argues, in essence, that it provided a copy of its lease agreement in Japanese, which was sufficient under the terms of the RFP. Additionally, the protester argues that the agency failed to apply "significant strengths" to its proposal. We conclude that neither allegation provides a basis to sustain the protest.

For this factor, each offeror was required to provide a clear, concise, and complete narrative verifying its technical understanding and capability, operational processes, technical expertise, and electronic capability. RFP at 80. As part of this requirement, each offeror was required to address 12 aspects of its approach, such as processes to procure all supply items, how it will demonstrate full operational capacity within 120 days of contract award, and delivery plans. *Id.* at 80-84. Particularly relevant, one aspect required each offeror to describe its warehouse space. *Id.* at 82-83. The description must address the location, size, layout, and whether the warehouse is part of larger complex or standalone. *Id.* at 83. If the warehouse is not standalone, the offeror must explain how the warehouse is divided by immovable walls from other warehouses with its own loading dock. *Id.* The offeror must also describe a separate entrance and exit for foot traffic. *Id.*

To support the narrative description, each offeror was required to provide sufficient documentation. As support for the warehouse configuration, each offeror was required to provide pictures and layouts/blueprints of the warehouse. RFP at 82. The photos and layouts/blueprints must be clearly labeled and highlighted. *Id.* Indeed, the RFP provided:

If the warehouse space is not a standalone warehouse, then the pictures and/or blueprints shall also clearly label the warehouse section(s) within the interior of the building, and shall clearly show and label the immovable wall(s) (no chain link fence(s)) that divide the space, and shall clearly show and label the separate entrance(s) and exit(s), as well as the loading dock(s). Please note docking stations will not count as an entrance or exit to the building.

Id. at 82-83.

For the ownership/leasehold documentation, the RFP specified that each offeror must provide "documentation of ownership or a copy of a proposed lease agreement for the warehouse(s) that will be used for this requirement." RFP at 83. The documentation must describe the warehouse and demonstrate that it conforms to the RFP's

specifications. *Id.* The documentation must also show that the leasing agreement will last for the entire period of performance. *Id.*

When evaluating proposals, the agency would assess each proposal based on the quality of approach and demonstrated capability consistent with the established requirements. RFP, amend. 3 at 98-99. As relevant here, the RFP defined a “moderate risk” as “[t]he proposal’s aspects can potentially cause disruption of schedule, increased cost, or degradation of performance. Special emphasis and close government monitoring will likely be able to overcome difficulties.” *Id.* at 99.

As part of its proposal, SupplyCore described its warehouse [DELETED]. AR, Tab 10, SupplyCore Tech. Proposal at 26. Its warehouse was [DELETED]. *Id.* The proposal narrative explained that the warehouse had a loading dock and sufficient area. *Id.* As supporting documentation, SupplyCore submitted a blueprint of the warehouse complex and photographs of the warehouse interior. *Id.* at 28. SupplyCore also submitted a copy of its lease agreement. *Id.* at 29-42. The lease agreement was written entirely in Japanese. *Id.*

When evaluating SupplyCore’s proposal, the agency assigned four strengths and one weakness. AR, exh. 4, TET Evaluation Report at 29. The strengths were assigned because SupplyCore demonstrated supply chain reliability, a strong delivery plan, ability to start performance within the 120-day period, and capacity to respond to surge requirements. *Id.* at 29-47.

The weakness was assigned because the evaluators determined that SupplyCore’s proposal did not provide clear and concise evidence that its warehouse conformed to the RFP’s requirements. AR, exh. 4, TET Evaluation Report at 37. The agency noted that SupplyCore’s blueprint did not indicate where the separate entrance, exit, and loading dock were located. *Id.* The agency also noted that SupplyCore’s leasing contract was entirely in Japanese, and therefore, it could not confirm the warehouse address, that the warehouse space would be available throughout the duration of the contract, and that the warehouse would be available upon contract award. *Id.* Ultimately, the agency determined that SupplyCore’s proposal met the RFP’s minimum requirements, but that the lack of documentation presented a moderate risk of unsuccessful performance. *Id.*

As noted above, SupplyCore argues that the agency unreasonably assigned the weaknesses and failed to assign “significant strengths” to its proposal. We review the allegations separately.

Warehouse Space

SupplyCore challenges both findings supporting the weakness. As to the agency’s conclusion regarding the lease agreement being insufficient evidence, SupplyCore counters that the RFP did not require supporting documents to be in English. Protest at 14-16. SupplyCore also argues that the finding is internally inconsistent because

GSA determined that the firm had met the minimum requirements but assigned a weakness. *Id.* at 15-16; Comments & Supp. Protest at 22. As to the other finding (*i.e.*, that the firm’s blueprint lacked labels as required by the RFP), SupplyCore argues that the agency’s conclusions were incorrect. Comments & Supp. Protest at 22.

For the first finding, GSA responds that the Japanese lease agreement was insufficient because it could not review the lease agreement without an English translation and therefore, any information contained therein was effectively unavailable. MOL at 7-8. The agency also responds that the evaluation is consistent because it determined that SupplyCore’s narrative description of its warehouse met the RFP’s requirements but did not have sufficient evidence to support the narrative. *Id.* at 12-13. As to the second finding, GSA responds that the allegation is untimely because the protester did not raise this challenge within ten days of becoming aware of the agency’s evaluation.

After reviewing the record, we are unpersuaded by SupplyCore’s arguments. First, we find nothing objectionable about downgrading the firm’s proposal because it failed to submit an English translation of its Japanese lease agreement. An agency may apply evaluation considerations that are not expressly outlined in the RFP where those considerations are reasonably and logically encompassed within the stated evaluation criteria. See *SOC LLC*, B-418487.2, B-418487.3, Feb. 4, 2021, at 10. Here, while the RFP did not specify that supporting documentation must be submitted in English, the fact of the matter is this procurement was conducted entirely in English, contemplated an evaluation conducted in English, and the RFP did not otherwise give any indication whatsoever that documents in other languages could be submitted as supporting material. Thus, given that context, the RFP logically encompassed a requirement that documents be submitted in English or with a certified English translation in order to provide agency evaluators with a meaningful opportunity for review. After all, our review confirms that the lease agreement, while labeled “[DELETED] Warehouse Lease Agreement,” was written entirely in Japanese and therefore provided no information from which the agency could use to verify the length of the lease agreement or that the warehouse space was consistent with the representations made as part of the proposal’s narrative, as required by the solicitation. AR, exh. 4, SupplyCore Tech. Proposal at 29-42. Accordingly, we deny this protest allegation.³

We are also unpersuaded by SupplyCore’s argument that this finding was internally inconsistent. Comments & Supp. Protest at 22 (“Since SupplyCore met the minimum

³ SupplyCore also argues that GSA unreasonably failed to solicit an English translation of the lease through clarifications. Comments & Supp. Protest at 20-21. GSA explains, and we agree, that agencies have broad discretion as to whether to seek clarifications from offerors, and offerors have no automatic right to clarifications regarding proposals. MOL at 11; *accord SigNet Techs., Inc.*, B-418677, July 23, 2020, at 4 (“Agencies have broad discretion as to whether to seek clarifications from offerors, and offerors have no automatic right to clarifications regarding proposals.”). Further, the RFP expressly reserved the government’s abilities to award a contract without discussions or conduct discussions and request clarifications on an as needed basis. RFP, amend. 3 at 96.

requirements, then by definition the Agency could not reasonably conclude that the same information created a 'moderate risk' of unsuccessful performance.”). Contrary to the premise of SupplyCore’s argument, the evaluators did not conclude that its proposal met all requirements set forth in the solicitation; rather, the agency evaluators concluded that SupplyCore’s narrative represented that it had a compliant warehouse but that the documentation was insufficient. In this regard, the evaluators explain:

In its technical proposal SupplyCore offered to provide a solution that met all performance requirements of the PWS under RFP Section C.3.2, Warehousing. That is what the TET and the SSA referred to in stating SupplyCore met the requirement in this area. Notwithstanding that commitment, SupplyCore failed to provide a full explanation and documentary validation to provide that they really had a compliant solution, in relationship to [the RFP’s instructions], specifically the warehousing requirements listed in [the RFP]. In that way they introduced moderate risk deserving of a weakness.

AR, Tab 14, Decl. of TET and SSA at 1. We see nothing unreasonable or contradictory about this determination because the finding accurately reflects that SupplyCore’s narrative explained that the warehouse complied with the solicitation’s specifications, but failed to provide verifying documentation. Accordingly, we deny the allegation.

Regarding the second finding, we agree with GSA that the challenge is untimely. Our Bid Protest Regulations, 4 C.F.R. § 21.2(a)(2), require that protests, other than those challenging the terms of a solicitation, be filed within 10 days of when a protester knew or should have known of its basis for protest. Further, where a protester initially files a timely protest, and later supplements it with new grounds of protest or argument in support thereof the later-raised allegation or argument must independently satisfy our timeliness requirements, since our Regulations do not contemplate piecemeal presentation or development of protest issues. *Medical Staffing Sols. USA*, B-415571, B-415571.2, Dec. 13, 2017, at 3.

Here, the challenge that the agency unreasonably evaluated SupplyCore’s blueprint as missing labels was filed more than 10 days after the protester first learned of this evaluation judgment. During the debriefing process (which closed on January 30), the agency specifically explained the following:

SupplyCore did not include pictures, layouts or narrative indicating that its warehouse space has its own separate loading dock(s) and does not indicate that the warehouse has a separate entrance & exit for foot traffic into the designated area.

AR, exh. 3, Unsuccessful Offeror Notification Letter at 12. SupplyCore’s protest, however, challenged only the agency’s finding regarding the Japanese lease agreement. See Protest at 14-16. SupplyCore did not challenge the agency’s finding concerning its labeling of the blueprints until responding to the agency’s report on

March 16. See Comments & Supp. Protest at 18-19. Thus, we dismiss the challenge as untimely because it was filed more than 10 days after SupplyCore first became aware of the finding. Accordingly, we dismiss this allegation.

Moreover, even if we considered the challenge on its merits, we would not find the protester's argument persuasive. Our review confirms that the blueprint lacks clear labels identifying ingress or egress points or that the walls are immovable. AR, Tab 10, SupplyCore's Tech. Proposal at 28. Additionally, while the blueprint includes symbols apparently representing freight-hauling trucks, the blueprint does not demonstrate that these represent separate loading docks for the firm's warehouse. *Id.*

Assignment of Significant Strengths

SupplyCore argues that GSA unreasonably failed to assign significant strengths because it used the incorrect definition for "outstanding" when evaluating proposals. Comments & Supp. Protest at 1-3. In this regard, SupplyCore points out that the evaluation report defines an "outstanding" rating as indicating that the "proposal contains multiple strengths," while the rating provided in the RFP states "[t]he proposal contains multiple strengths *and/or at least one significant strength.*" *Id.* at 1-2. Thus, since the evaluation report omits the phrase "at least one significant strength," SupplyCore argues "it is likely the evaluators did not understand they were permitted, or required, to consider whether any of SupplyCore's strengths met the standard of a significant strength." *Id.* at 2. In other words, SupplyCore argues that GSA could have elevated one of the assigned strengths to a "significant strength" and then assigned an "outstanding" rating. *Id.*

GSA responds that the omission was "merely a transcription error, but the RFP was always the standard and was continually referenced by the evaluation team during the evaluation process." Supp. MOL at 2. The agency also provides a declaration from the TET and SSA stating that, during the evaluation, they did not consider any feature present in SupplyCore's proposal as warranting the assignment of a significant strength. AR, exh. 14, Decl. of TET and SSA at 1.

Even if the agency evaluators failed to recognize that they could have assigned a "significant strength" to SupplyCore's proposal, we conclude that such error did not result in any competitive prejudice and decline to sustain the protest as a result. Again, competitive prejudice is an essential element of every viable protest, and we will not sustain a protest unless the protester demonstrates a reasonable possibility that it was prejudiced by the agency's actions. *Dust Busters Plus, LLC*, B-419853.7, July 26, 2021, at 6.

To illustrate, the PBVD shows that the agency specifically compared the qualitative merit of both SupplyCore's and Amentum's identified strengths. For example, under the technical excellence and capabilities factor, the SSA compared certain plans for both offerors, and concluded Amentum's plan "goes above and beyond the government's requirement," while SupplyCore's plan only offered a [DELETED]. AR, exh. 7, PBVD

at 39. As another example (and to SupplyCore's benefit), the agency determined that one of SupplyCore's strengths involving [DELETED], which was noted as enhancing [DELETED], was essentially unmatched by Amentum. *Id.* at 40. Thus, whether GSA characterized SupplyCore's features as significant strengths would not have improved the firm's competitive standing because the characterization does not alter the underlying proposal feature or have any meaningful effect on the agency's comparison. See *SOS Int'l, LLC, supra* (adjectival ratings are merely guides to intelligent decision-making).

To the extent SupplyCore contends that our decision in *SierTek-Peerless JV LLC*, B-422085, B-422085.2, Jan. 2, 2024, stands for the proposition that "an error affecting the adjectival rating under the most important factor creates a reasonable possibility of prejudice because it can alter the best-value determination[,]," we disagree. See Supp. Comments at 5. In *SierTek-Peerless*, the protester challenged the issuance of a task order to another firm for services supporting a property management program. *SierTek-Peerless JV LLC, supra* at 1. As relevant here, both *SierTek-Peerless* and the awardee were assigned ratings of "high confidence" for the "prior experience" factor. *Id.* at 2. The protester argued that the government unreasonably evaluated the awardee's proposal under the "prior experience" factor because it did not compare the contract sizes for the awardee's referenced experience against the size of the solicited-for effort when making the relevancy determination. *Id.* at 5-6. We agreed because our review confirmed that the agency's evaluation lacked such comparison. *Id.* at 6.

Significantly, we concluded that the error resulted in competitive prejudice because a reasonable consideration of whether the awardee had performed relevant contracts might result in the agency considering the awardee's prior experience less favorably. *SierTek-Peerless JV LLC, supra*. In this way, we determined that the error may have impacted the best-value determination and sustained the protest. *Id.* Critically, we did not sustain the protest solely because the awardee was assigned an incorrect adjectival rating; rather, as explained, we sustained the protest because the agency improperly considered the features (*i.e.*, the referenced contracts) as part of its evaluation. *Id.* at 5-6. Here, we do not find SupplyCore's argument persuasive, or as providing us with any basis to conclude that the firm's alleged harm may have resulted in competitive prejudice.

Tradeoff Analysis

As a final matter, SupplyCore contends that the agency unreasonably made the selection decision because "the [a]gency's flawed evaluations suppressed SupplyCore's technical standing, inflated Amentum's comparative advantage, and deprived the SSA of an accurate basis for judgment." Comments & Supp. Protest at 24. This allegation is based on the challenges to the agency's evaluation, which we have already found to be

lacking merit. Therefore, it is without a basis and dismissed. *Safeguard Base Operations, LLC*, B-415588.6, B-415588.7, Dec. 14, 2018, at 4.

The protest is denied.

Edda Emmanuelli Perez
General Counsel