



# Decision

**Matter of:** Wepa Commercial Cleaning, LLC

**File:** B-424129.2

**Date:** August 17, 2026

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GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

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## DIGEST

1. Protest challenging the sufficiency of the agency's best-value tradeoff decision is denied where the record reflects that the decision was reasonable and adequately documented.
2. Protest challenging the agency's post-corrective action decision as unreasonable because it resulted in the same award decision is denied where there is generally no requirement that an agency reconcile a later evaluation with an earlier one and where the agency's decision was reasonable and consistent with the terms of the solicitation.

## DECISION

Wepa Commercial Cleaning, LLC, a service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) of Chula Vista, California, protests the award of a contract to Salmon Group, Inc., an SDVOSB of Washington, D.C., under request for proposals (RFP) No. 36C26025R0060, issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for custodial services. The protester challenges various aspects of the agency's best-value tradeoff decision and prior corrective action.

We deny the protest.

## BACKGROUND

The RFP was issued on June 10, 2025, pursuant to Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) part 15, as an SDVOSB set-aside for custodial services at the Seattle VA Medical Center, to include routine cleaning of restrooms, dining areas, the canteen, retail space, elevators, hallways, exam and waiting rooms, and administrative areas. Contracting

Officer's Statement (COS) at 1; Agency Report (AR), Exh. 2, RFP at 17, 23. The RFP contemplated the award of a firm-fixed-price contract to be performed over a 1-year base period and four 1-year option periods. RFP at 21-22. The RFP provided for award to be made on a best-value tradeoff basis, considering three evaluation factors: (1) technical approach, (2) past performance, and (3) price. *Id.* at 95-96. The solicitation advised that the technical approach factor and past performance factors were equally weighted, and that those two factors, when combined, were significantly more important than price. *Id.* at 96.

Under the technical approach factor, the solicitation advised that the agency would evaluate "the extent to which the technical proposal describes how the requirements will be met" in various areas, including the extent to which an offeror "[p]rovides a level of detail, specificity and demonstrates the technical approach as to how the scope and tasks of the Performance Work Statement [PWS] will be met." *Id.* at 97. Offerors would be assigned adjectival ratings of outstanding, good, acceptable, marginal, or unacceptable for their technical approaches. *Id.* at 96. The solicitation also contemplated the assessment of strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies under this factor. *Id.* at 97.

Under the past performance factor, proposals would receive both a relevancy rating and a confidence rating. *Id.* at 98. Under the price factor, the solicitation advised that the agency would perform a price reasonableness analysis to ensure that prices "are complete, fair, and reasonable." *Id.* at 99.

The agency received 53 proposals by the July 28, 2025 due date for receipt of proposals. AR, Exh. 10, Unsuccessful Offeror Notice at 1; RFP at 17. On September 25, the agency selected Salmon Group for award and notified the offerors of this award decision; following a debriefing, Wepa filed an agency-level protest, which the VA denied on November 26. COS at 2. On December 2, Wepa filed a protest with our Office that we subsequently dismissed as academic due to the agency's corrective action, which would consist of reevaluating Wepa's and Salmon Group's technical proposals and "determin[ing] whether the award should change." See *Wepa Com. Cleaning, LLC*, B-424129, Feb. 18, 2026, at 1 (unpublished decision).

The agency reevaluated Wepa's and Salmon Group's proposals as follows:

|                    | Wepa                                   | Salmon Group                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Technical Approach | Acceptable                             | Outstanding                             |
| Past Performance   | Relevant,<br>Substantial<br>Confidence | Relevant,<br>Satisfactory<br>Confidence |
| Price              | \$9,849,335                            | \$10,083,174                            |

AR, Exh. 7, Reevaluation and Award Decision at 25-26.

In performing its reevaluation, making its new tradeoff decision, and reaffirming the award to Salmon Group, the agency concluded that Salmon Group's proposal represented the best value to the agency. *Id.* at 26. The agency found that Salmon Group's technical proposal "indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements and presented a "very low" risk of unsuccessful performance. *Id.* at 28. The agency found that Wepa's technical approach "met requirements and reflected no worse than moderate performance risk overall"; the agency identified four weaknesses in Wepa's technical proposal because "certain PWS-required tasks are either not addressed or are described in limited detail. . . . In areas where Wepa's narrative does not explain or address PWS tasks, the Government is limited in its ability to fully assess Wepa's understanding of those requirements." *Id.* at 9, 15. With regard to the other evaluation factors, the agency concluded that Salmon Group's "outstanding technical approach far outweighs Wepa's slight past performance advantage and [is] worth the 2% price premium." *Id.* at 30.

On May 12, 2026, after the reevaluation and new tradeoff decision, the agency informed Wepa that its proposal had not been selected for award. COS at 3; AR, Exh. 10, Unsuccessful Offeror Notice at 1. Wepa requested a debriefing, which the agency provided on May 20. AR, Exh. 11, Post-Award Debriefing at 1. On May 29, this protest followed.<sup>1</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The protester challenges the agency's best-value tradeoff decision as unreasonable and insufficiently documented, and the protester further asserts that the agency's corrective action was not meaningful. After reviewing the record, we find no basis to sustain the protest.<sup>2</sup>

### Tradeoff Decision

Wepa argues that the agency's best-value tradeoff decision was conclusory and failed to adequately explain why the agency selected Salmon Group's proposal over Wepa's

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<sup>1</sup> This protest is not subject to a GAO protective order because Wepa opted to proceed *pro se*, that is, without counsel. Accordingly, our discussion of some aspects of the record, particularly of the agency's evaluation of the awardee's proposal, is necessarily general to limit references to non-public information. Nonetheless, GAO reviewed the entire record *in camera* in preparing our decision. Citations to the contracting officer's statement, the memorandum of law, and exhibits 7 and 8 in the agency report refer to the redacted version of those documents.

<sup>2</sup> In its various protest submissions, Wepa has raised arguments that are in addition to, or variations of, those specifically discussed below. While we do not 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.

lower-priced proposal. Protest at 5. The protester points to the fact that its proposal had a lower price than the awardee's and a higher past performance rating, contending that the agency unreasonably chose Salmon Group's proposal for award when its "only apparent advantage" was its technical approach. Comments at 3-4. With regard to Wepa's own technical approach, the protester acknowledges that the agency identified four weaknesses in its proposal but generally asserts that its proposal was "[a]wardable" because it was still technically acceptable. *Id.* at 6. The protester argues that the agency needed to do more than identify these weaknesses in Wepa's proposal; it needed to explain why Salmon Group's technical approach merited the award. *Id.* at 7. In sum, Wepa argues that the agency has not provided a "rational, adequately documented tradeoff explaining why [the awardee's] technical advantages outweighed Wepa's superior past performance rating and lower price." *Id.* at 4.

The agency responds that its tradeoff analysis was reasonable and adequately documented. Memorandum of Law (MOL) at 24. The agency argues that it identified four weaknesses in Wepa's technical proposal based on the protester's omission of certain PWS tasks and failure to address other PWS tasks in sufficient detail in its proposal. *Id.* at 25; AR, Exh. 7, Reevaluation and Award Decision at 30. In contrast, the agency asserts that the awardee's proposal "provided 'lasting, compounding and measurable benefits in a healthcare facility that significantly reduce[d] risk to the government.'" MOL at 25 (quoting AR, Exh. 7, Reevaluation and Award Decision at 30). In other words, the agency contends that it did, in its contemporaneous evaluation, identify aspects of the awardee's proposal that made it technically superior to Wepa's proposal. MOL at 25. The agency explains that it properly documented its decision to award the contract to Salmon Group because "the technical benefits offered by [Salmon Group] provide added value that outweighs Wepa's slight advantages in past performance and price." *Id.* (quoting AR, Exh. 7, Reevaluation and Award Decision at 30). The agency also notes that Wepa "does not raise any specific protest grounds challenging the [a]gency's assignment of strengths, weaknesses, or significant weaknesses to [Salmon Group]." MOL at 19.

Where, as here, a solicitation contemplates award on a best-value tradeoff basis, agencies have discretion to make award to a concern that has submitted a higher-priced, technically superior offer. *Def. Base Servs., Inc.*, B-416874.3, B-416874.4, Aug. 19, 2019, at 7. An agency's decision is governed only by the test of rationality and consistency with the solicitation's stated evaluation criteria. *Id.* Source selection decisions must be documented and must include the rationale for any business judgments and tradeoffs made or relied upon by the source selection authority, but there is no need for extensive documentation of every consideration factored into a tradeoff decision. *Navistar Def., LLC; AM Gen., LLC*, B-407975.2 *et al.*, Dec. 19, 2013, at 12. 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. *Worldwide Info. Network Sys., Inc.*, B-408548, Nov. 1, 2013, at 6.

Based on our review of the record, we find no basis to conclude that the agency failed to reasonably conduct or sufficiently document its tradeoff between Wepa and Salmon Group. Indeed, the record shows that the agency considered the merits of each offeror's proposal. For example, the agency noted the lack of detail in areas of Wepa's technical proposal. AR, Exh. 7, Reevaluation and Award Decision at 29 ("Wepa also received several weaknesses [under the technical approach factor], where multiple PWS tasks, such as the [r]etail [s]tore cleaning, daily terminal cleaning, and interior window/windowsill cleaning[] were either omitted or described with insufficient detail."). In contrast, the agency documented the superiority of the awardee's technical proposal, which "indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the [solicitation's] requirements" and which "provides lasting, compounding and measurable benefits in a healthcare facility that significantly reduce[s] risk to the government." *Id.* at 28, 30. For this reason, we reject Wepa's assertion that the agency failed to explain why the awardee's technical approach presented the best value to the government.<sup>3</sup> See Comments at 7.

Moreover, we agree with the agency that Wepa failed to raise specific protest grounds challenging the agency's evaluation of the awardee's technical proposal. See MOL at 19; Protest at 4-7. Wepa also failed to meaningfully challenge the agency's evaluation of its own technical proposal, including the agency's identification of four weaknesses. See Comments. In other words, the protester has failed to adequately allege protest grounds challenging the agency's evaluation of technical proposals, which undergirds and gives rise to the agency's best-value tradeoff decision.

The agency, on the other hand, has sufficiently documented its tradeoff decision to show that it was aware of the relative merits and costs of Salmon Group's and Wepa's proposals. See *Worldwide Info. Network Sys.*, *supra*. The agency explained that the awardee's "outstanding technical approach far outweighs Wepa's slight past performance advantage" and makes Salmon Group's proposal "worth the 2% price premium." AR, Exh. 7, Reevaluation and Award Decision at 30. On this record, Wepa has failed to show that the agency's best-value tradeoff decision was unreasonable or insufficiently documented. Accordingly, this protest ground is denied.

#### Corrective Action

The protester also alleges that the agency's corrective action, which the agency took in response to the prior protest Wepa filed with our Office, "did not reconcile the

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<sup>3</sup> Relatedly, the protester complains that the agency's tradeoff decision is inadequately documented precisely because the agency's reevaluation and award decision, particularly the evaluation of Salmon Group's technical proposal, is redacted. Comments at 5. We understand that the details of the agency's evaluation of Salmon Group's technical proposal were redacted from the protester's copy of the agency report; that is because, as noted above, the protester chose to proceed with its protest *pro se*.

difference” and “failed to meaningfully explain what changed during corrective action,” and resulted in an “outcome [that] is identical in material respects to the original outcome.” Protest at 5, 7. The protester asserts that the agency’s corrective action “[a]ppears [i]nsufficiently [m]eaningful” because it resulted, again, in award to Salmon Group, “while past performance and price remained unchanged.” Comments at 7. Wepa simultaneously contends that it “does not argue that corrective action must always change the award result” while arguing that its challenge to the agency’s corrective action in this instance is reasonable because the agency limited its corrective action to reevaluating technical proposals and selected Salmon Group’s proposal for award “despite Wepa’s higher past performance rating and lower price.” *Id.*

The agency responds that it is not required to explain to Wepa how its evaluation may have changed during corrective action. MOL at 26. Instead, the agency asserts that what matters is that it did what it promised to do: it reevaluated technical proposals and made a new award decision. *Id.* at 27; see *Wepa Com. Cleaning, LLC, supra* at 1 (“The VA advised that it will ‘suspend the contract awarded to [SGI] and will re-evaluate Protester and SGI’s technical proposals and determine whether the award should change.’”). The agency argues that the crux of the issue is whether its final evaluation and decision was reasonable and consistent with the terms of the solicitation, which the agency contends it was. MOL at 27.

Our Office has generally found the argument that a reevaluation following corrective action was *per se* unreasonable because it was not reconciled with an earlier evaluation to be without legal or factual basis; this is because there is generally no requirement that an agency reconcile a later evaluation with an earlier one. See *TekSynap Corp.*, B-419464.3, B-419464.4, Jan. 5, 2023, at 6. Quite simply, the overriding concern in our review is not whether an agency’s final evaluation is consistent with an earlier evaluation, but rather, whether it is reasonable and consistent with the solicitation’s stated evaluation criteria. *Id.*

Based on our review of the record, we agree with the agency that its post-corrective action decision was reasonable. Despite its assertion to the contrary, the protester’s arguments suggest that the agency’s evaluation and its tradeoff decision needed to change, presumably in a way that favored Wepa, for the corrective action to be reasonable. See Protest at 7; Comments at 7. However, the protester has not pointed to any support for its argument that the unchanged award outcome demonstrates that the agency’s corrective action was not meaningful. See Comments at 7.

Finally, to the extent the protester’s argument depends on its complaint that its proposal had a lower price and a higher past performance rating, and therefore should have received award, this argument has been resolved by our discussion above of the agency’s tradeoff decision. Specifically, we do not find unreasonable the agency’s determination that Salmon Group’s technical superiority outweighed Wepa’s past performance advantage and justified the slight 2 percent price premium of the awardee’s proposal. See AR, Exh. 7, Reevaluation and Award Decision at 30. In other words, the protester has not demonstrated that the agency’s reevaluation and

subsequent award decision were unreasonable or inconsistent with the solicitation's stated evaluation criteria. Ultimately, based on our review of the record, we agree with the agency that its corrective action was reasonable. This protest ground is denied.

The protest is denied.

Edda Emmanuelli Perez  
General Counsel