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Decision

Matter of: Security Management and Integration

File: B-407742

Date: January 30, 2013

Aric Bomszyk, Esq., Barokas, Martin & Tomlinson, for the protester.
MAJ Frank Yoon, MAJ Hugh McClean, Esq., Department of the Air Force, for the agency.
Gary R. Allen, Esq., and Guy R. Pietrovito, Esq., Office of the General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

The rejection of the protester's proposal as unacceptable was reasonable where the protester failed to provide a required plan for meeting performance objectives.

DECISION

Security Management and Integration, Inc. (SMI), of Tacoma, Washington, protests the rejection of its proposal under request for proposals (RFP) No. FA4830-12-R-0021, issued by the Department of the Air Force for mess attendant services. SMI challenges the agency's technical evaluation of its proposal.

We deny the protest.

BACKGROUND

The RFP, issued as a Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) small business set-aside under the commercial item acquisition procedures of Federal Acquisition Regulation part 12, provided for the award of a fixed-price contract for mess attendant services at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. A Performance Work Statement (PWS) described performance objectives and required thresholds/standards for the objectives. PWS ¶ 2.1 at 12-14. For example, the PWS stated that the contractor would be required to comply 100 percent of the time with the specified sanitation requirements. *Id.* at 12.

The RFP informed offerors that award would be made on a lowest-price, technically acceptable basis, considering the following three factors: technical approach and experience, past performance, and price. See RFP amend. 1, at 13-15.

The RFP included directions for the preparation of proposals. With respect to the technical approach and experience factor, the RFP required offerors to submit a complete and realistic plan for meeting the PWS performance objectives. RFP amend 3, at 3. The RFP also instructed offerors to demonstrate that “they have a minimum of three years experience in performing mess attendant services that [are] similar in scope to this requirement within the last six years.” Id.

The Air Force received seven proposals, including SMI’s, none of which were found to be technically acceptable. The agency determined that SMI’s and four other offerors’ proposals were in the competitive range and conducted discussions.¹ Agency Report (AR), Tab 13.1, Proposal Analysis Report, at 5-6. The agency informed SMI that it had failed to provide a complete and realistic plan for meeting the PWS performance objectives, and had failed to demonstrate that it had at least 3 years of similar mess attendant experience. AR, Tab 10, SMI’s Evaluation Notices (ENs), at 1.

The agency received and evaluated revised proposals. The Air Force found that SMI did not provide an acceptable plan for meeting the PWS performance objectives, but instead restated the objectives using blanket statements of compliance with the required thresholds and standards. AR, Tab 13.1, Proposal Analysis Report, at 7-8. The agency also determined that SMI failed to demonstrate at least 3 years of relevant experience.² Id.

The agency rejected SMI’s proposal as technically unacceptable, and SMI filed an agency-level protest with the Air Force. This protest followed the Air Force’s denial of the agency-level protest.

¹ The agency did not include in the competitive range the offers of the two firms that were not found to be HUBZone small businesses. AR, Tab 13.1, Proposal Analysis Report, at 5.

² With respect to SMI’s experience, the Air Force noted that in response to the ENs, SMI proposed a daycare provider as a subcontractor, which SMI stated had 16 years of experience providing meals for children. Id. at 12; see also AR, Tab 12, SMI Revised Proposal, at 8-9. The agency found that this information was insufficient to allow it to determine that the subcontractor’s experience was similar to the RFP’s requirement for mess attendant services. AR, Tab 13.1, Proposal Analysis Report, at 8.

DISCUSSION

SMI challenges the agency's determination that the protester's proposal was technically unacceptable.³ Specifically, SMI contends that its proposal, as revised after receiving the ENs, provided a detailed and quantitative response addressing each PWS performance objective. SMI also contends that it demonstrated sufficient relevant experience.

The evaluation of an offeror's proposal is a matter largely within the agency's discretion. Frontline Healthcare Workers Safety Found., Ltd., B-402380, Mar. 22, 2010, 2010 CPD ¶ 91 at 5. In reviewing a protest that challenges an agency's evaluation of proposals, our Office will not reevaluate the proposals, but will examine the record to determine whether the agency's judgment was reasonable and consistent with the stated evaluation criteria and applicable statutes and regulations. Ocean Servs., LLC, B-406087, B-406087.2, Feb. 2, 2012, 2012 CPD ¶ 62 at 5. In this regard, it is an offeror's responsibility to submit a well-written proposal, with adequately detailed information which clearly demonstrates compliance with the solicitation and allows a meaningful review by the procuring agency. Mike Kesler Enters., B-401633, Oct. 23, 2009, 2009 CPD ¶ 205 at 2-3. An offeror that does not affirmatively demonstrate the merits of its proposal risks rejection of its proposal. HDL Research Lab, Inc., B-294959, Dec. 21, 2004, 2005 CPD ¶ 8 at 5.

Here, the record supports the reasonableness of the agency's judgment that SMI failed to provide a complete and realistic plan for satisfying the PWS performance objectives. SMI's initial proposal did not identify a plan and otherwise failed to address most of the requirements. See AR, Tab 9, SMI Technical Proposal. In response to the agency's discussion questions advising the protester that its proposal had failed to provide the required plan, SMI restated the PWS performance objectives and thresholds/standards, but did not provide a plan for how it would satisfy the requirements. See AR, Tab 12, SMI Revised Proposal at 9-10. Although SMI contends that it provided enough detail to show that it would perform the requirements, this is nothing more than disagreement with the agency's evaluation judgment. A protester's disagreement with the agency's evaluation provides no basis to question the reasonableness of the evaluators' judgments. Mike Kesler Enters., supra. We find that the agency reasonably rejected SMI's

³ In its agency-level protest and here, SMI argues that the RFP criteria are "[s]ubjective, irrelevant and peculiar," present "self-evident questions," and do "not clearly state . . . what the RFP is requesting." See Protest, exh. A, Agency-Level Protest, at 1-2. This challenge to the terms of the solicitation is untimely. Our Bid Protest Regulations require protests challenging apparent solicitation improprieties to be filed before the closing time set for receipt of initial proposals. See 4 C.F.R. § 21.2(a)(1) (2012).

proposal as unacceptable for failing to adequately address the mandatory RFP requirement to provide a plan for satisfying the PWS performance objectives.⁴

The protest is denied.

Susan A. Poling
General Counsel

⁴ Given that we find reasonable the agency's rejection of SMI's proposal as unacceptable with respect to its technical approach, we do not address the agency's evaluation of the firm's experience.