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Decision

Matter of: Navistar Defense, LLC; AM General, LLC

File: B-407975.2; B-407975.3; B-407975.4; B-407975.5

Date: December 19, 2013

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Kevin C. Dwyer, Esq., Daniel E. Chudd, Esq., Ethan E. Marsh, Esq., and Charles L. Capito, III, Esq., Jenner & Block LLP, for General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems, an intervenor.

Michael G. McCormack, Esq., Department of the Air Force, for the agency.

Cherie J. Owen, Esq., and David A. Ashen, Esq., Office of the General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

Protests that agency unreasonably evaluated proposals are denied where record reflects that evaluation was reasonable and consistent with solicitation evaluation criteria.

DECISION

Navistar Defense, LLC (Navistar), of Lisle, Illinois, and AM General, LLC, of South Bend, Indiana, protest the United States Special Operations Command's award of a contract to General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems, of St. Petersburg, Florida, under request for proposals (RFP) No. H9222-12-R-0003, for ground mobility vehicles. Both protesters challenge the evaluation of proposals and the best value determination.

We deny the protests.

BACKGROUND

The solicitation, issued on April 12, 2012, provided for the award of a seven-year indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity (ID/IQ) contract with cost-plus-fixed-fee and fixed price contract line items (CLINs). Under the contract, the successful offeror will provide a combat vehicle that is internally transportable in a CH-47 helicopter and that can be employed during a wide range of lethal and non-lethal special operations missions. Navistar Agency Report (AR), Tab 11, Statement of Work (SOW), at 7. The RFP's SOW informed offerors that the agency sought an existing, proven material solution. SOW at 7.

Award was to be made to the offeror whose proposal was determined to be the most advantageous to the government, considering the following evaluation factors and subfactors:

Factor 1 - Capability	
Subfactor A - Production	
Element 1 - Production Approach	
Element 2 - Manufacturing Facilities/Key Tooling & Equipment	
Element 3 - Quality System and Plan	
Subfactor B - Technical	
Element 1 - Vehicle Performance	
Element 2 - Systems Integration/Engineering	
Subfactor C - Management	
Element 1 - Workforce/Manpower Planning	
Element 2 - Integrated Logistics Support	
Element 3 - Small Business Subcontracting Plan	
Factor 2 - Past Performance	
Factor 3 - Cost/Price	

RFP at 134. The production and technical subfactors under the capability factor were of equal importance, and both were significantly more important than the management subfactor. RFP at 135. Overall, the capability factor was significantly more important than past performance, which was more important than cost/price. Id.

For purposes of evaluating the vehicle performance element of the technical subfactor, the RFP stated that "the Government will evaluate the 'Top 5 Key Performance Requirements,'" including: (1) transportability; (2) tractive effort/mobility; (3) standardization; (4) command, control, computers, communications, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR); and (5) survivability. RFP at 141. In this regard, the solicitation listed the specifications for each key performance requirement that would be evaluated, and indicated the methods of evaluation that "may" be used for each. Id. at 142. For example, one element of the transportability requirement was the requirement that the vehicle

have a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) in excess of 13,000 pounds. Id. In evaluating this requirement, the RFP provided that the agency could use the paper proposal and/or modeling and simulation. Id. To further clarify its evaluation methodology, the agency reiterated in its May 9, 2012 questions and answers (Q&A) to offerors that “[t]he additional requirements above and beyond the ‘TOP 5’ Key Performance Requirements will not be evaluated.” Q&A, May 9, 2012, at 1.

The agency received seven proposals by the solicitation closing date. Based on the evaluation of the initial proposals, the agency established a competitive range of, and opened discussions with, General Dynamics, Navistar, and AM General. After conducting discussions, requesting final proposal revisions, and reopening discussions, the agency requested a second round of final proposal revisions (FPR). The final results of the agency’s evaluation were as follows:

Evaluation Criteria	Navistar	General Dynamics	AM General
Factor 1 - Capability	Good	Outstanding	Good
A. Production	Good	Outstanding	Good
1. Production Approach	Good	Outstanding	Acceptable
2. Mfg. Facilities/Key Tooling & Equipment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
3. Quality Sys. and Plan	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
B. Technical	Acceptable	Outstanding	Acceptable
1. Vehicle Performance	Marginal	Outstanding	Acceptable
2. Systems Integration/Engineering	Good	Outstanding	Acceptable
C. Management	Good	Acceptable	Good
1. Workforce/Manpower Planning	Good	Acceptable	Outstanding
2. Integrated Logistics Support	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding
3. Small Business Subcontracting Plan	Acceptable	Marginal	Acceptable
Factor 2 - Past Performance	Satisfactory Confidence	Limited Confidence	Satisfactory Confidence
Factor 3 - Cost/Price	\$577,061,062	\$577,818,902	\$575,238,904

Navistar AR, Tab 23, Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) Report, at 9-15.

The source selection authority (SSA) conducted an independent review of the proposals and the evaluation results in the SSEB Report, and made a comparative assessment of the offerors’ proposals. In this regard, the SSA noted that while Navistar’s proposal earned an overall capability rating of good with 22 strengths, the proposal was rated as only marginal under the vehicle performance element of the technical subfactor as a result of one significant weakness and three weaknesses.

Specifically, Navistar's proposal received a significant weakness with respect to the compliance of its proposed vehicle with the solicitation's air transportability requirement that the vehicle be internally transportable in a CH-47 helicopter. Navistar AR, Tab 26, Source Selection Decision Document (SSDD), at 2, 5; Navistar AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report at 47. In addition, three other weaknesses were assessed Navistar under the vehicle performance element, including: (1) a failure to demonstrate an adequate approach to meeting the critical flight (maximum) vehicle weight (CFVW) requirement; (2) a failure to demonstrate an adequate approach to meeting the head and leg room space Human Factors Engineering requirements; and (3) a failure to address the weight of the material handling equipment for the crew protection (armor) kit requirement. SSDD at 2, 5; Navistar AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report at 23, 57-60. Also, Navistar received a past performance rating of satisfactory confidence based upon an evaluation of the firm's recent and relevant contracts within the last three years. SSDD at 2; Navistar AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report at 70.

Likewise, the SSA noted that while AM General's proposal earned an overall capability rating of good with 19 strengths and 5 weaknesses, the proposal was rated as only acceptable under the vehicle performance element of the technical subfactor as a result of 3 weaknesses, including: (1) a failure to propose adequate elbow and knee-leg-thigh clearances under the solicitation's Human Factors Engineering requirements; (2) a failure to demonstrate an adequate approach to meeting the internal air transportability weight requirements; and (3) a failure to demonstrate sufficient braking functionality. AM General AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report, at 45. In addition, AM General received a past performance rating of satisfactory confidence based upon its performance assessments. SSDD at 4; AM General AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report at 73.

In contrast, General Dynamics' proposal earned an overall capability rating of outstanding, with 30 strengths and only 1 weakness (failure to meet a small business subcontracting goal), as well as ratings of outstanding for the production and technical subfactors, including outstanding for vehicle performance. SSDD at 3, 5. The SSA noted that General Dynamics' proposal earned a rating of limited confidence under the past performance factor, as a result of a lack of relevant prime contract experience and marginal ratings on the only General Dynamics contract that was found to be very relevant. However, the SSA's concern was mitigated by the strong performance record and experience of the firm's subcontractors. Id.

Based upon his review, the SSA determined that General Dynamics' proposal represented the best value given its outstanding rating for capability, the most important evaluation factor. SSDD at 5. The SSA specifically found that the value of General Dynamics' proposal outweighed the firm's limited confidence past performance rating. Id. (limited confidence past performance assessment "did not offset the value offered by" General Dynamics' proposal). As for price/cost, the SSA concluded that the value of General Dynamics' superior capability proposal

outweighed the minor price differences of less than 0.5% relative to AM General's proposal and 0.13% relative to Navistar's proposal. Id. ("Cost/Price variance in the proposals of a maximum of only 0.45% did not offset value offered by the [General Dynamics] proposal"). Upon learning of the resulting award to General Dynamics, and after receiving debriefings, Navistar and AM General filed these protests.

DISCUSSION

The protesters raise numerous challenges to the agency's evaluation of proposals, as well as to the agency's best value decision. The evaluation of an offeror's proposal is a matter within the agency's discretion. IPlus, Inc., B-298020, B-298020.2, June 5, 2006, 2006 CPD ¶ 90 at 7, 13. In reviewing an agency's evaluation, our Office will not reevaluate proposals; instead, we will examine the record to ensure that it was reasonable and consistent with the solicitation's stated evaluation criteria and applicable procurement statutes and regulations. Metro Mach. Corp., B-402567, B-402567.2, June 3, 2010, 2010 CPD ¶ 132 at 13; Urban-Meridian Joint Venture, B-287168, B-287168.2, May 7, 2001, 2001 CPD ¶ 91 at 2. An offeror's disagreement with the agency's evaluation is not sufficient to render the evaluation unreasonable. Ben-Mar Enters., Inc., B-295781, Apr. 7, 2005, 2005 CPD ¶ 68 at 7. Here, although our decision does not individually address each and every assertion, we have fully considered all of the protesters' arguments and find that none provide a basis upon which to question the overall evaluation.

Evaluation of General Dynamics' Proposal

First, both Navistar and AM General challenge the agency's evaluation of General Dynamics' proposed vehicle on the ground that General Dynamics' Advance Light Strike Vehicle (ALSV) fails to meet many of the solicitation's requirements. For example, both protesters contend that the ALSV cannot meet the requirement for a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) in excess of 13,000 pounds, which was one element of transportability, one of the top 5 key performance requirements. RFP at 142.

We find no merit to the protester's arguments regarding the ALSV, since they are based on the incorrect assumption that General Dynamics proposed its ALSV. The record here reflects that, in fact, General Dynamics proposed a different vehicle--the Flyer GMV 1.1--which has a GVWR of [DELETED] pounds, which met the RFP's requirement that vehicles have a GVWR in excess of 13,000 pounds.¹ Navistar AR,

¹ General Dynamics explains that the Flyer GMV 1.1 differs markedly from the Flyer ALSV in several respects:

The Flyer GMV 1.1 (a) is [DELETED]

General Dynamics Dismissal Request at 3 (citing Neaves Decl. ¶ 5).

Tab 22, General Dynamics Second FPR, at 1; Navistar AR, Tab 24, SSEB Report, at 1.

Next, Navistar contends that the agency's evaluation of General Dynamics' proposal under the capability factor was flawed because the agency failed to evaluate compliance with all of the solicitation's performance specifications, including the 187 page list of specifications incorporated into the RFP. Navistar notes that many of these specifications involve critical issues, such as safety of the crew and the ability of the vehicle to perform its mission. Navistar contends that if the agency had evaluated proposals for compliance with every requirement, it would have found that the awardee's proposed vehicle did not meet some of the requirements. Id. at 9.

As noted by the agency, however, the RFP clearly indicated that the agency would evaluate only the top 5 key performance requirements when assessing proposals under the vehicle performance element. Specifically, the RFP stated that, "[i]n the evaluation of . . . vehicle performance, the Government will evaluate the 'Top 5 Key Performance Requirements.'" RFP at 140. To the extent that this language left any question in offerors' minds regarding the evaluation of performance specifications, the agency specifically stated in the May 9, 2012 questions and answers (Q&A), that "[t]he additional requirements above and beyond the 'TOP 5' Key Performance Requirements will not be evaluated." May 9, 2012, Q&A, at 1. Thus, we find that the agency reasonably interpreted the solicitation as requiring the evaluation of only those performance specifications included within the top 5 key performance requirements.

Evaluation of Navistar's Proposal

Navistar next challenges the agency's assignment of a significant weakness to its proposal under the vehicle performance element of the technical subfactor. Specifically, Navistar contends that the agency acted unreasonably in assigning a significant weakness due to the firm's evaluated failure to adequately address the requirement that vehicles be internally air transportable in a CH-47 helicopter.

As set forth above, one of the top 5 key performance requirements was transportability. RFP at 140. The solicitation stated that the agency would evaluate the ability of the proposed vehicle to be internally air transportable in a CH-47 helicopter. Id. (referencing performance specification § 3.4.39a). Performance Specification § 3.4.39a mandated that the vehicle at critical flight vehicle weight be internally air transportable by a C/MH-47 series aircraft with an internal extended

range fuel system in accordance with military standard (MIL STD) 1366.² MIL STD 1366 states that the CH-47 has a weight limit of no more than 2,500 pounds per square foot on the treadways. Department of Defense, MIL STD 1366, Oct. 31, 2006, at 89. Therefore, the agency required that proposals demonstrate that their proposed vehicles did not exceed the weight limits in order to be internally air transportable.

The record here demonstrates that Navistar was fully aware of the agency's concerns about the transportability of its vehicle. First, the agency expressed its concerns during the initial round of discussions, notifying Navistar that the front and rear wheel loads of its proposed vehicle exceeded the 2,500 pounds per wheel weight limit identified in the solicitation for internal air transportability within a CH-47 helicopter. See RFP at 140; Performance Specification § 3.4.39a; Navistar AR, Tab 16, Navistar Initial Evaluation Notices, at 4. Navistar's first FPR addressed this concern by proposing to use [DELETED]. The agency, however, found that, while this solution met the weight limit of 2,500 pounds per wheel, the use of [DELETED] introduced other risks that had a potential impact on cost and schedule. Navistar AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report, at 45. The agency also found that, while the [DELETED] would resolve the issue regarding compliance with the wheel weight limit during transport, the vehicle would still exceed the wheel weight limit during loading and unloading. Id. Thereafter, the agency reopened discussions and expressed these concerns to Navistar, stating that the issue constituted a significant weakness. Navistar AR, Tab 18, Navistar Final Evaluation Notices, at 5-6.

Navistar's second FPR abandoned the use of [DELETED] and stated that it would instead use [DELETED]. Navistar AR, Tab 19, Navistar EN Responses with Proposal Excerpts, at 2-3. However, Navistar acknowledged that this solution was based on the assumption that the [DELETED] would be provided by the helicopter crew. Id. at 3. In assessing Navistar's second FPR, the agency evaluators noted that CH-47 helicopters are not dedicated to the transportation of these vehicles, and that the expectation that the helicopter crews would provide [DELETED] was unreasonable. Id. at 46. As a result, the evaluators found that, while [DELETED] was not an unacceptable option, Navistar's approach appreciably increased the risk of attaining certification for CH-47 internal air transportability. Id. As a result, Navistar's second FPR likewise was assigned a significant weakness for its failure to comply with the RFP's requirement for internal air transportability. Id.

Navistar asserts that it was unreasonably faulted for failing to provide [DELETED]. Navistar Protest at 19. Navistar notes in this regard that neither the RFP nor the

² MIL STD 1366 is the "Department of Defense Interface Standard for Transportability Criteria." <http://www.tea.army.mil/pubs/nr/deploy/transinstruction/MILSTD1366E.pdf>; Navistar Contracting Officer's Statement at 31.

military standard incorporated into the RFP contain a requirement for offerors to provide [DELETED].³ Id.

The evaluation in this area was reasonable. As an initial matter, we note that the agency does not contend that the RFP or the applicable military standard required use of [DELETED]. Rather, the solicitation required that offerors propose a solution that would allow their proposed vehicles to be transported inside a CH-47 helicopter. RFP at 140-42. In order to meet this requirement, offerors were required to demonstrate that their solutions met the requirement that “wheel weight shall not exceed 2,500 lbs.” Performance Specifications at 23. Navistar, in turn, ultimately proposed to meet the 2,500 pound-per-wheel limit by redistributing the weight load using [DELETED]. Navistar, however, has acknowledged that carrying the [DELETED] in a combat zone would unnecessarily introduce risks regarding improvised explosive devices, fire damage, etc. to the vehicle and its occupant.” Navistar Protest at 20, n.8. Further, as noted above, CH-47 helicopters are not dedicated to the transportation of these vehicles, and the agency found that it was unreasonable to expect that the helicopter crews would be able to provide [DELETED]. In these circumstances, where there is no basis to assume that helicopter crews would be carrying the [DELETED] necessary in order to accommodate the weight of Navistar’s vehicle, it follows that there is no basis to

³ Navistar contends that the requirement that vehicles not exceed 2500 pounds per wheel when carried internally within a CH-47 helicopter is not a top 5 key performance requirement, and therefore should not have been evaluated. Instead, Navistar argues that the 2,500 lbs./wheel limit is contained in performance specification 3.4.39c, which is identified as a “tier one” specification, not a top 5 key performance requirement. Navistar Supp. Response, Nov. 27, at 13. The RFP, however, stated that transportability was one of the top 5 key performance requirements that would be evaluated under the vehicle performance element. RFP at 140. Specifically, the RFP stated that, with regard to the top 5 key performance requirements, internal air transportability in a CH-47 helicopter would be evaluated with reference to performance specification 3.4.39.a. Id. Performance specification 3.4.39a provided that vehicles at “CFVW shall be internally air transportable (IAT) by C/MH-47 series aircraft with an internal extended range fuel system [in accordance with] MIL STD 1366.” Navistar AR, Tab 12, Performance Specifications, at 23. MIL STD 1366 limits the weight on the treadways of CH-47s to no more than 2,500 pounds per square foot. Department of Defense, MIL STD 1366, Oct. 31, 2006, at 89, available at <http://www.tea.army.mil/pubs/nr/deploy/transinstruction/MILSTD1366E.pdf>; Navistar Contracting Officer’s Statement at 31. Therefore, we find that the agency reasonably evaluated this requirement as a necessary part of evaluating a top 5 key performance requirement, that is, CH-47 internal transportability.

question the assignment of a significant weakness to Navistar's proposal for failure to meet the solicitation's requirements regarding internal air transportability.⁴

Navistar also argues that its proposed vehicle met the solicitation's requirements even without the use of [DELETED] because the agency applied an incorrect standard in calculating the applicable critical flight vehicle weight (CFVW). Specifically, the solicitation stated that CFVW would be calculated by including the weight of three 98th percentile fully-equipped males, Navistar's Comments, Exh. 5, RFP Annex O, at 4, but Navistar contends that MIL-STD-1366 does not include the weight of these three males in its calculations. Navistar's Comments at 44. The protester contends that the agency stated that it would amend the solicitation to remedy this inconsistency and clarify that the calculation of CFVW would not include the weight of three males, but it never did so, and instead the agency amended the solicitation to increase the CFVW to 10,500 pounds. Id. at 45. Accordingly, in its proposal, Navistar calculated its CFVW to include the weight of three fully-equipped males. Id. at 46. However, Navistar now contends that the CFVW calculation should have excluded the weight of these three males. The protester contends that if the weight of these fully-equipped males is subtracted from its CFVW, its proposed vehicle would meet the weight limit. Id.

Under our Bid Protest Regulations, a solicitation ambiguity apparent on the face of the solicitation must be protested prior to the time set for receipt of initial proposals or quotations, when it is most practicable to take effective action against such defects. 4 C.F.R. § 21.2(a)(1) (2013). Furthermore, an offeror who chooses to compete under a patently ambiguous solicitation does so at its own peril, and cannot later complain when the agency proceeds in a way inconsistent with one of

⁴ Navistar contends that the agency misled it during discussions regarding this issue because one member of the evaluation team allegedly stated that it is typical for the helicopter crews to provide the [DELETED] themselves. Navistar Protest at 21. However, in its evaluation notice provided to Navistar after reviewing the firm's draft second final proposal revision, and before Navistar submitted its second FPR, the agency informed the protester that its assumption that [DELETED] would be provided by the helicopter crew was incorrect; that the helicopters are not exclusively used for transportation of these vehicles; and that the protester's proposal would need to address the space and weight impact of carrying the [DELETED] on the vehicle. Contracting Officer's Statement at 33-34; Navistar AR, Tab 20, Navistar Evaluation Notices, at 5. Indeed, as noted, Navistar itself admits that the [DELETED] could not be carried on the vehicle itself because doing so would "unnecessarily introduce risks regarding improvised explosive devices, fire damage, etc. to the vehicle and its occupants." Navistar Protest at 20. Therefore, we find no basis to conclude that the agency's discussions with Navistar in this regard were misleading as to the use of the [DELETED] approach to meeting the 2,500 pounds per wheel limitation.

the possible interpretations. Wackenhut Servs., Inc., B-276012.2, Sept. 1, 1998, 98-2 CPD ¶ 75 at 5; CardioMetrix, B-274585, Nov. 18, 1996, 96-2 CPD ¶ 190 at 3; Watchdog, Inc., B-258671, Feb. 13, 1995, 95-1 CPD ¶ 69 at 5.

Here, by its own actions, Navistar evidenced its recognition that the calculation of CFVW was to include the weight of three 98th percentile fully-equipped males. Navistar first adopted one interpretation in its proposal (that is, that CFVW weight calculation included the weight of three males) and then a different interpretation in its protest filings (that the weight of three males should be subtracted from the CFVW calculation).⁵ Having chosen to compete despite the patently ambiguous nature of the solicitation in this area, Navistar cannot now complain when the agency proceeds in a manner inconsistent with one of the possible interpretations and includes the weight of three fully-equipped males in its calculation. Wackenhut Servs., Inc., B-276012.2, Sept. 1, 1998, 98-2 CPD ¶ 75 at 5. Moreover, having submitted a proposal on the understanding that the CFVW calculation was to include the weight of three fully-equipped males, Navistar cannot now assert that this approach was inconsistent with the terms of the solicitation. Northrop Grumman Space and Missile Sys. Corp.; Textron Marine & Land Sys. Corp., B-400837 et al., Feb. 17, 2009, 2009 CPD ¶ 52 at 10. The integrity of the protest process does not permit a protester to espouse one interpretation or position during the procurement, and then argue during a protest that the interpretation or position is unreasonable or otherwise improper. Id.; IBM Global Bus. Servs., B-298833.4, B-298833.5, Mar. 1, 2007, 2007 CPD ¶ 82 at 6; Northrop Grumman Sys. Corp., B-298954 et al., Jan. 12, 2007, 2007 CPD ¶ 63 at 8; BST Sys., Inc., B-298761, B-298761.2, Dec. 1, 2006, 2006 CPD ¶ 62 at 6; AAI Eng'g Support, Inc., B-257857, Nov. 16, 1994, 95-1 CPD ¶ 2 at 3-4.

Evaluation of AM General's Proposal

AM General also challenges the evaluation of its own proposal. For example, AM General contends that the agency unreasonably assigned a weakness with regard to the vehicle's braking system. AM General Protest at 24-25.

As set forth above, another of the top 5 key performance requirements was tractive effort/mobility. RFP at 142. Braking was one of the elements of tractive

⁵ Compare Navistar AR, Tab 19, Navistar EN Responses, at 1 ("Our CFVW based on the Product Sample is [DELETED] lbs, which exceed the requirement by [DELETED] lbs") and Navistar's Comments at 46 (Navistar "provided a CFVW calculation that included the weight of three fully-equipped 98 percentile males, as required by . . . the RFP") with Navistar's Comments at 45 ("755.8 lbs. [the weight of three fully-equipped males] must be subtracted from the CFVW in order to determine whether a vehicle meets the weight requirements for [internal air transportability]").

effort/mobility to be evaluated in assessing offerors' proposed approaches. Id. Specifically, the solicitation stated that braking would be evaluated with reference to performance specification § 3.4.23, which required that "[t]he vehicle shall have service brakes, parking brakes, emergency brakes, and antilock brakes." Performance Specifications at 19. Further, the RFP contained guidance on the expected "mission terrain profile," which indicated that the vehicle would operate on unimproved surfaces, including cross-country (40%) and trails (30%), as well as secondary roads (20%) and primary roads (10%). Performance Specifications at 66-69. Finally, offerors were required to "identify and thoroughly discuss the product sample's performance relative to the 'Top 5 Key Performance Requirements,'" and, where a requirement was not able to be successfully tested during product sample evaluation, offerors were to "thoroughly identify and discuss the exceptions." RFP at 120.

AM General did not, in its initial proposal, include an antilock braking system (ABS) in the proposed vehicle, notwithstanding the solicitation requirement for ABS. Performance Specifications at 19. As a result, the agency issued an evaluation notice on this issue. AM General AR, Tab 16, AM General Evaluation Notices, at 7. The agency also expressed concern that, during testing of the product sample, AM General's vehicle completed only 2 of 6 stops in less than the required 216 feet. Specifically, the agency noted that:

If the vehicle brakes have difficulty stopping the empty weight of the vehicle, then there is a high risk of not meeting the stopping distance when the vehicle is burdened to CFVW [critical flight vehicle weight] or GVW [gross vehicle weight]. This is a risk to safety, and survivability and this limits vehicle mobility.

Id. As a result, AM General's initial proposal was assigned a significant weakness on account of its approach to braking. AM General AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report, at 51.

AM General responded in its first FPR to the agency's concerns by indicating that it would add an ABS system to its vehicle prototype, AM General First FPR at 3, which led the agency to reduce the company's significant weakness rating to a weakness rating. AM General AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report, at 56. The agency also concluded that AM General's proposal did not provide sufficient details of the ABS functionality to allow the agency to determine the vehicle's braking ability "for the majority of the GMV's mission profile." AM General AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report, at 55; AM General AR, Tab 20, Request for Second FPR, at 7. The agency further noted that AM General's proposal failed to explain how the ABS system would be integrated into AM General's proposed vehicle, and what effect the addition of ABS would have on other vehicle systems. Id.

In its second FPR, AM General furnished additional details regarding its braking approach, including stating that the ABS would be calibrated for off-road conditions. AM General AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report, at 56. The agency, however, continued to be concerned because AM General had not tested the performance of its ABS system over cross-country terrain, which makes up a considerable percentage (40%) of the GMV's mission profile; instead, the company submitted test results for conditions that are not consistent with the GMV's mission profile. As a result, the agency retained the weakness previously assigned to AM General's proposal with respect to braking. AM General AR, Tab 23, SSEB Report, at 56.

The evaluation of AM General's braking approach was reasonable. In this regard, the record indicates that AM General furnished neither a product sample, nor test results supporting the firm's claim that the ABS would function properly on cross-country terrain. While AM General contends that the RFP did not require offerors to provide evidence regarding the performance of their ABS on cross-country terrain, the solicitation included an expected "mission terrain profile" which indicated that the vehicle would operate 40% of the time on cross-country terrain. Performance Specifications at 66-69. In addition, the solicitation generally required offerors to establish the expected performance of their vehicle. RFP at 120. Under these circumstances, we see nothing unreasonable about the agency's decision to assign a weakness to this vehicle with respect to its braking capability.

Source Selection Decision

Finally, Navistar and AM General contend that the source selection decision document does not reflect that the SSA performed a comparative assessment of proposals, and does not document any tradeoffs made in the selection of General Dynamics' proposal.

Source selection decisions must be documented, and must include the rationale for any business judgments and price/technical tradeoffs made or relied upon by the SSA. General Dynamics Info. Tech., Inc., B-406059.2, Mar. 30, 2012, 2012 CPD ¶ 138 at 4. However, there is no need for extensive documentation of every consideration factored into a tradeoff decision. Worldwide Information Network Sys., Inc., B-408548, Nov. 1, 2013, 2013 CPD ¶ 254 at 6. 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.

Here, the record indicates that the SSA reviewed the proposals and the SSEB's evaluation of the proposals, and then made a comparative assessment of the proposals. While the tradeoff paragraph, reviewed alone, is admittedly brief, it appears at the conclusion of a document in which the SSA specifically discussed the weaknesses identified in the unsuccessful offerors' proposals, as well as the one remaining weakness in General Dynamics' proposal. SSDD at 2-5. The

document also discussed the basis for each offeror's past performance rating, as well as any cost issues that remained in the offerors' proposals. Id. In making the tradeoff decision, the SSA specifically emphasized that General Dynamics' proposal received the highest rating under the most important evaluation factor, capability, as well as the highest ratings under the two most important subfactors of the capability factor. Id.; SSA Supplemental Statement at 1. While acknowledging that General Dynamics had received a past performance rating of limited confidence, the SSA concluded that, since the capability factor was significantly more important than past performance, General Dynamics' superior capability proposal outweighed the lower rating under the past performance factor. Id. Further, since the price premium associated with General Dynamics' proposal totaled no more than 0.45%, the SSA determined that General Dynamics' superiority under the capability factor was such that the proposal represented the best value. In these circumstances, we find that the best value determination is sufficient to establish that the agency was aware of the relative merits and costs of these competing proposals. See, e.g., Worldwide Information Network Sys., Inc., supra.

The protests are denied.

Susan A. Poling
General Counsel