Decision

 Matter of: Inte-Great Corporation

File: B-272780

Date: October 28, 1996

Ron Schenk for the protester.
Donald F. Hassell, Esq., Brian T. Kildee, Esq., and Robin B. Teichman, Esq., Nuclear
Regulatory Commission, for the agency.
Jennifer D. Westfall-McGrail, Esq., and Christine S. Melody, Esq., Office of the
General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

Agency properly declined to give protester the opportunity to make an oral
presentation and to demonstrate its software where request for proposals (RFP)
provided for such presentations/demonstrations only by offerors whose software
complied with the RFP's mandatory requirements, and protester did not establish
compliance with the mandatory requirements in its written proposal.

DECISION

Inte-Great Corporation protests the rejection of its proposal as technically
unacceptable under request for proposals (RFP) No. NRC-ADM-96-157, issued by the
Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for replacement of its automated property
management system. The protester contends that it should have been permitted to
make an oral presentation to demonstrate the technical acceptability of its proposed
software package.

We deny the protest.

BACKGROUND

The RFP, which was issued on April 5, 1996, sought offers to provide a commercial
off-the-shelf software package, including customization of the software as necessary
to meet the NRC's needs, and all necessary services and supplies to replace the
NRC's existing property management system. The solicitation identified mandatory[1]

---

[1]Mandatory requirements included the following property management capabilities
and features: the ability to generate management reports integrating all

(continued...)

3591028

and desirable requirements for the software, and informed offerors that those whose proposed software complied with the mandatory requirements would be given an opportunity to make oral technical presentations and to demonstrate their products to validate their performance. Offerors were instructed that prior to the time set for receipt of initial proposals under the RFP, they should submit to the NRC "a matrix showing how each NRC mandatory requirement is satisfied in the proposed software."[2]

Six offerors submitted proposals prior to the established closing time. The technical evaluators concluded that two of the six proposals demonstrated compliance with the RFP's mandatory requirements and scheduled these two offerors for oral presentations. The remaining four proposals, including Inte-Great's, were determined to be technically unacceptable. By letter dated June 19, the NRC notified Inte-Great that its proposal had been eliminated from the competition since it had not demonstrated compliance with the RFP's mandatory requirements.

DISCUSSION

Inte-Great contends that its proposal "clearly indicated an affirmative response to all of the [RFP's] mandatory requirements"--which, according to the protester, is all that the solicitation required--and that it therefore should have been invited to make an oral presentation and to furnish a demonstration to validate its software's capabilities. We disagree with the protester's characterization of both the solicitation's requirements and its own response.

_____

[1](...continued)
combinations of available data fields; the ability to maintain specified standard and NRC-specific property data field records and user records; the ability to create--and archive--audit trails for all property transactions; incorporation of a state-of-the-art inventory control subsystem supported by a scanner/barcode capability; the ability to provide a maintenance history of each item; and the ability to maintain self-calculating depreciation schedules.

Additional mandatory requirements (focusing on security) included the capability to attribute every transaction to a particular individual; the provision of barriers between users and protected resources; and the ability to provide for different levels of access among users.

[2]Although not relevant in the context of this protest, the solicitation also set forth an evaluation scheme to be used in selecting an awardee from among those offerors whose proposed software satisfied the mandatory requirements.

As a preliminary matter, the protester's technical proposal did not clearly indicate an affirmative response to each of the RFP's mandatory requirements. On the contrary, the proposal simply did not address a number of the mandatory requirements regarding security; for example, it did not address the requirement that the software be capable of attributing each transaction to the individual initiating it or the requirement that it be capable of detecting and documenting all access and attempted access. Thus, even under the protester's interpretation of the RFP (i.e., that an affirmative response to each of the mandatory requirements was all that the RFP required), its proposal was unacceptable because it did not in fact furnish an affirmative response to each of those requirements.

Further, the RFP did not require merely an affirmation that each mandatory requirement would be met; it required written documentation "showing how" each requirement would be met. We think that a reasonable offeror should have understood this to mean that it needed to describe the features of its software in sufficient detail to allow the agency to determine if it met the mandatory requirements.

Many of the protester's responses did not convey this information, and thus we think that the agency reasonably determined that the responses were insufficient to establish compliance with the mandatory requirements. For example, the RFP required that the software "[c]reate audit trails for all property transactions including the capability to archive all such transactions." Inte-Great's brief response essentially parroted the language of the RFP as follows:

> "[The software offered] creates an audit trail for all property record transactions and changes. These audit trails may be archived as necessary."

The same repetition of the RFP language is evident in Inte-Great's response to the four specific security requirements; Inte-Great's general statement[3] provided no detail as to how these requirements would be met, and, in fact, as noted above, did not address some of the requirements at all. Similarly with respect to the requirement to maintain self-calculating depreciation schedules, the protester's

---

[3]The relevant portion of Inte-Great's proposal provides as follows:

> "[The software offered] allows the user to specify any degree of security access imaginable. The security sub-system will let the user give access, view rights, edit rights, delete rights and other restrictions down to the field level. It meets all of the levels stated in the Statement of Work."

response---that its software "maintains self-calculating depreciation schedules by month or year"--was too general to show how it met the requirement.[4]

Where a solicitation provides for demonstrations by offerors to validate compliance with mandatory requirements, the agency reasonably may restrict the demonstrations to offerors who have established compliance with the mandatory requirements in their written proposals. <u>See</u> <u>Informatics, Inc.</u>, B-194926, July 2, 1980, 80-2 CPD ¶ 8. Here, the RFP required offerors to first demonstrate in writing that their software met the RFP's requirements in order to be eligible to make an oral presentation and demonstration. Inte-Great did not furnish enough information in its proposal to enable the agency evaluators to conclude that its software would satisfy the RFP's mandatory requirements. Accordingly, we think that it was reasonable and consistent with the RFP for the agency to decide not to consider Inte-Great's proposal further by inviting it to make an oral presentation.

The protest is denied.

Comptroller General
of the United States

---

[4]In comparison, the proposal that was included in the competitive range described in detail the features of the software offered which were responsive to the mandatory requirements.