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minimize the scope of the bundling, and the rationale for not choosing those alternatives (*i.e.*, consider the strategies under paragraphs (b)(6) (i) and (d) of this section).

(ii) At least 30 days prior to the solicitation release, the procuring activity shall provide the PCR and the agency OSDBU a copy of the proposed acquisition, including the analysis required by paragraph (d)(7) of this section, the acquisition plan, any bundling information required under paragraph (b)(3) of this section, and any other relevant information. The PCR and agency OSDBU or SBS, as applicable, shall work together to develop alternative acquisition strategies identified in paragraph (b)(6) of this section to enhance small business participation.

(8) *Significant subcontracting opportunity.* (i) Where a bundled or substantially bundled requirement offers a significant opportunity for subcontracting, the procuring agency must designate the following factors as significant factors in evaluating offers:

(A) A factor that is based on the rate of participation provided under the subcontracting plan for small business in the performance of the contract; and

(B) For the evaluation of past performance of an offeror, a factor that is based on the extent to which the offeror attained applicable goals for small business participation in the performance of contracts.

(ii) Where the offeror for such a bundled contract qualifies as a small business concern, the procuring agency must give to the offeror the highest score possible for the evaluation factors identified in paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section.

(e) *OSDBU Oversight Functions.* The Agency OSDBU must:

(1) Conduct annual reviews to assess the:

(i) Extent to which small businesses are receiving their fair share of Federal procurements, including contract opportunities under programs administered under the Small Business Act;

(ii) Adequacy of the bundling documentation and justification; and

(iii) Adequacy of actions taken to mitigate the effects of necessary and justified contract bundling on small businesses (*e.g.*, review agency over-

sight of prime contractor subcontracting plan compliance under the subcontracting program).

(2) Provide a copy of the assessment under paragraph (e)(1) of this section to the Agency Head and SBA Administrator.

[61 FR 3312, Jan. 31, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 31908, June 11, 1998; 64 FR 57370, Oct. 25, 1999; 65 FR 45833, July 26, 2000; 68 FR 60012, Oct. 20, 2003]

§ 125.3 Subcontracting assistance.

(a) *General.* The purpose of the subcontracting assistance program is to provide the maximum practicable subcontracting opportunities for small business concerns, including small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, certified HUBZone small business concerns, certified small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and small business concerns owned and controlled by women. The subcontracting assistance program implements section 8(d) of the Small Business Act, which includes the requirement that, unless otherwise exempt, other-than-small business concerns awarded contracts that offer subcontracting possibilities by the Federal Government in excess of \$500,000, or in excess of \$1,000,000 for construction of a public facility, must submit a subcontracting plan to the appropriate contracting agency. The Federal Acquisition Regulation sets forth the requirements for subcontracting plans in 48 CFR 19.7, and the clause at 48 CFR 52.219-9.

(b) *Responsibilities of prime contractors.*

(1) Prime contractors (including small business prime contractors) selected to receive a Federal contract that exceeds the traditional simplified acquisition threshold of \$100,000, that will not be performed entirely outside of any state, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and that is not for services which are personal in nature, are responsible for ensuring that small business concerns have the maximum practicable

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opportunity to participate in the performance of the contract, including subcontracts for subsystems, assemblies, components, and related services for major systems, consistent with the efficient performance of the contract.

(2) A small business cannot be required to submit a formal subcontracting plan or be asked to submit a formal subcontracting plan, a small-business prime contractor is encouraged to provide maximum practicable opportunity to other small businesses to participate in the performance of the contract, consistent with the efficient performance of the contract.

(3) Efforts to provide the maximum practicable subcontracting opportunities for small business concern may include, as appropriate for the procurement, one or more of the following actions:

(i) Breaking out contract work items into economically feasible units, as appropriate, to facilitate small business participation;

(ii) Conducting market research to identify small business subcontractors and suppliers through all reasonable means, such as performing on-line searches on the Central Contractor Registration (NCR), posting Notices of Sources Sought and/or Requests for Proposal on SBA's SUB-Net, participating in Business Matchmaking events, and attending pre-bid conferences;

(iii) Soliciting small business concerns as early in the acquisition process as practicable to allow them sufficient time to submit a timely offer for the subcontract;

(iv) Providing interested small businesses with adequate and timely information about the plans, specifications, and requirements for performance of the prime contract to assist them in submitting a timely offer for the subcontract;

(v) Negotiating in good faith with interested small businesses;

(vi) Directing small businesses that need additional assistance to SBA;

(vii) Assisting interested small businesses in obtaining bonding, lines of credit, required insurance, necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or services;

(viii) Utilizing the available services of small business associations; local, state, and Federal small business assistance offices; and other organizations; and

(ix) Participating in a formal mentor-protégé program with one or more small-business protégés that results in developmental assistance to the protégés.

(c) *Additional responsibilities of large prime contractors.* (1) In addition to the responsibilities provided in paragraph (b) of this section, a prime contractor selected for award of a contract or contract modification that exceeds \$500,000, or \$1,000,000 in the case of construction of a public facility, is responsible for:

(i) Submitting and negotiating before award an acceptable subcontracting plan that reflects maximum practicable opportunities for small businesses in the performance of the contract as subcontractors or suppliers. A prime contractor may submit a commercial plan, described in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, instead of an individual subcontracting plan, when the product or service being furnished to the Government meets the definition of a commercial item under 48 CFR 2.101;

(ii) Making a good-faith effort to achieve the dollar and percentage goals and other elements in its subcontracting plan;

(iii) Submitting a timely, accurate, and complete SF-294, Subcontracting Report for Individual Contract, and SF-295, Summary Subcontract Report; or entering the same information into an electronic database approved by SBA;

(iv) Cooperating in the reviews of subcontracting plan compliance, including providing requested information and supporting documentation reflecting actual achievements and good-faith efforts to meet the goals and other elements in the subcontracting plan;

(v) Providing pre-award written notification to unsuccessful small business offerors on all subcontracts over \$100,000 for which a small business concern received a preference. The written notification must include the name and location of the apparent successful offeror and if the successful offeror is a

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small business, veteran-owned small business, service-disabled veteran-owned small business, HUBZone small business, small disadvantaged business, or women-owned small business; and

(vi) As a best practice, providing the pre-award written notification cited in paragraph (c)(1)(v) of this section to unsuccessful and small business offerors on subcontracts at or below \$100,000 whenever it is practical to do so.

(2) A commercial plan, also referred to as an annual plan or company-wide plan, is the preferred type of subcontracting plan for contractors furnishing commercial items. A commercial plan covers the offeror's fiscal year and applies to the entire production of commercial items sold by either the entire company or a portion thereof (e.g., division, plant, or product line). Once approved, the plan remains in effect during the contractor's fiscal year for all Federal government contracts in effect during that period. The contracting officer of the agency that originally approved the commercial plan will exercise the functions of the contracting officer on behalf of all agencies that award contracts covered by the plan.

(3) The additional prime contractor responsibilities described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section do not apply if:

(i) The prime contractor is a small business concern;

(ii) The prime contract or contract modification is a personal services contract; or

(iii) The prime contract or contract modification will be performed entirely outside of any state, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(d) *Determination of good-faith efforts.* Evidence that a large business prime contractor has made a good-faith effort to comply with its subcontracting plan or other subcontracting responsibilities includes supporting documentation that:

(1) The contractor performed one or more of the actions described in paragraph (b) of this section, as appropriate for the procurement;

(2) Although the contractor may have failed to achieve its goal in one

socio-economic category, it over-achieved its goal by an equal or greater amount in one or more of the other categories; or

(3) The contractor fulfilled all of the requirements of its subcontracting plan.

(e) *CMR Responsibilities.* Commercial Market Representatives (CMRs) are SBA's subcontracting specialists. CMRs are responsible for:

(1) Facilitating the matching of large prime contractors with small business concerns;

(2) Counseling large prime contractors on their responsibilities to maximize subcontracting opportunities for small business concerns;

(3) Instructing large prime contractors on identifying small business concerns by means of the CCR, SUB-Net, Business Matchmaking events, and other resources and tools;

(4) Counseling small business concerns on how to market themselves to large prime contractors;

(5) Maintaining a portfolio of large prime contractors and conducting Subcontracting Orientation and Assistance Reviews (SOARs). SOARs are conducted for the purpose of assisting prime contractors in understanding and complying with their small business subcontracting responsibilities, including developing subcontracting goals that reflect maximum practicable opportunity for small business; maintaining acceptable books and records; and periodically submitting reports to the Federal government; and

(6) Conducting periodic reviews, including compliance reviews in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section.

(f) *Compliance reviews.* A prime contractor's performance under its subcontracting plan is evaluated by means of on-site compliance reviews and follow-up reviews. A compliance review is a surveillance review that determines a contractor's achievements in meeting the goals and other elements in its subcontracting plan for both open contracts and contracts completed during the previous twelve months. A follow-up review is done after a compliance review, generally within six to eight months, to determine if the contractor has implemented SBA's recommendations.

(2) All compliance reviews begin with a validation of the contractor's most recent SF-295, Summary Subcontract Report, and SF-294, Subcontracting Report for Individual Contracts, if applicable. The validation includes a review of the contractor's methodology for completing these reports and a sampling of specific documentation to substantiate small business status.

(3) Upon completion of the review and evaluation of a contractor's performance and efforts to achieve the requirements in its subcontracting plans, the contractor's performance will be assigned one of the following ratings: Outstanding, Highly Successful, Acceptable, Marginal, or Unsatisfactory. The factors listed in paragraph (c) of this section will be taken into consideration, where applicable, in determining the contractor's rating. However, a contractor may be found Unsatisfactory, regardless of other factors, if it cannot substantiate the claimed achievements under its subcontracting plan.

(4) Any contractor that receives a marginal or unsatisfactory rating must provide a written corrective action plan to SBA, or to both SBA and the agency that conducted the compliance review if the agency conducting the review has an agreement with SBA, within 30 days of its receipt of the official compliance report.

(5) Any contractor that fails to comply with paragraph (f)(4) of this section, or any contractor that fails to demonstrate a good-faith effort, as set forth in paragraph (d) of this section, may be considered for liquidated damages under the procedures in 48 CFR 19.705-7 and the clause at 52.219-16. This action shall be considered by the contracting officer upon receipt of a written recommendation to that effect from the CMR. The CMR's recommendation must include a copy of the compliance report and any other relevant correspondence or supporting documentation.

(6) Reviews and evaluations of contractors with commercial plans are identical to reviews and evaluations of other contractors, except that contractors with commercial subcontracting plans do not submit the SF-294, Subcontracting Report for Individual Con-

tracts. Instead, goal achievement is determined by comparing the goals in the approved commercial subcontracting plan against the cumulative achievements on the SF-295, Summary Subcontract Report, for the same period. The same ratings criteria set forth in paragraph (f)(3) of this section apply to contractors with commercial plans.

(7) SBA is authorized to enter into agreements with other Federal agencies or entities to conduct compliance reviews and otherwise further the objectives of the subcontracting program. Copies of these agreements will be published on <http://www.sba.gov/GC>. SBA is the lead agency on all joint compliance reviews with other agencies.

(g) *Subcontracting consideration in source selection.* When an ordering agency anticipates placing an order against a Federal Supply Schedule, government-wide acquisition contract (GWAC), or multi-agency contract (MAC), the ordering agency may evaluate subcontracting as a significant factor in its source selection process. In addition, the ordering agency may also evaluate subcontracting as a significant factor in source selection when entering into a blanket purchase agreement. At the time of contract award, the contracting officer must disclose to all competitors which one (or more) of these three elements will be evaluated as an important source selection evaluation factor in any subsequent procurement action. A small-business offeror automatically receives the maximum possible score or credit on this evaluation factor without having to submit a subcontracting plan and without having to demonstrate subcontracting past performance. The factors that may be evaluated, individually or in combination, are:

(1) The subcontracting to be performed on the specific requirement;

(2) The goals negotiated in previous subcontracting plans; and

(3) The contractor's past performance in meeting the subcontracting goals contained in previous subcontracting plans.

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