



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide the policy and guidance for the preparation of Pre-Award Debriefings for the SPAWAR claimancy. Meaningful debriefings serve to strengthen and enhance the Government's relationship with industry, instilling greater confidence in the acquisition process, through comprehensive and open exchanges in which the offeror is given an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the solicitation, discussions, evaluation, and the source selection process.

A debriefing is a meeting between government personnel and an offeror. It is held to inform an offeror of the basis for the selection decision when award has been made through competitive negotiation procedures on a basis other than price or price related factors. It may be held either prior to (pre-award) or after contract award (post-award). It may be done orally, in writing, or by any other method acceptable to the Contracting Officer.

Related guidance is available under CMPG [4.1.3 Conduct Pre-Award Debrief](#).

2. POLICY

2.1 Debriefings May be Held When

- Offerors excluded from the competitive range (or otherwise excluded from the competition before award) submit a timely request for a pre-award debriefing in accordance with [FAR 15.505\(a\)\(1\)](#). If the debriefing is delayed until after award, it shall include all information normally provided in a post award debriefing.
- Unsuccessful offerors submit a timely request for a post-award debriefing in accordance with [FAR 15.506\(a\)\(1\)](#). Unsuccessful offerors who receive a pre-award debriefing are not entitled to a post-award debriefing involving the same solicitation in accordance with [FAR 15.505\(b\)](#).
- Successful offerors (awardee), request a post award debriefing. Good business practice dictates that the Government should perform this debrief since post award conferences, which are often provided to successful offerors, do not necessarily substitute for a debriefing.

2.2 Objectives of a Debriefing Include

- Explaining the rationale for excluding the offeror from competition (if applicable);
- Instilling confidence in the offeror that they were treated fairly;
- Assuring the offeror that proposals were evaluated in accordance with the solicitation, as well as applicable laws and regulations;
- Identifying weaknesses in the offeror's proposal, so the offeror can prepare better proposals in response to future Government acquisitions; and
- Reducing misunderstandings and protests.

2.3 A Debriefing is NOT

- A page-by-page analysis of the offeror's proposal;
- A comprehensive point-by-point comparison between the proposals of the debriefed offeror and the successful offeror(s); nor
- A debate or defense of the Government's award decision or evaluation results.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 PCO

The PCO is responsible for the overall debriefing and assembling the debriefing team.



3.2 Contract Specialist

- Notifies offerors promptly, and in writing, when proposals are excluded from the competitive range (see [FAR 15.503\(a\)](#)).
- Participates in the debriefing.
- Ensures that a copy of the debriefing memorandum is filed in the official contract file.
- Performs additional duties outlined in the [Procedure](#) section below.

3.3 PMW/Technical Code

Provides support and performs duties as outlined under the [Procedure](#) section below.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Preparation

4.1.1 IDENTIFYING THE GOVERNMENT TEAM

The **PCO** should identify the Government debriefing team members, with the selection based on the complexities presented in each acquisition and the specific knowledge Government personnel possess. The Government team should display that it fully understood the offeror's proposal; if this is not conveyed, the offeror will have little confidence in the conduct of the acquisition.

4.1.2 IDENTIFYING THE DEBRIEFED/UNSUCCESSFUL OFFEROR'S TEAM

Prior to the debriefing, the **PCO** should ask the offeror to identify all individuals by name and position that will attend the debriefing. Normally, no limitation should be placed on the number of personnel the offeror may bring to a debriefing.

4.1.3 EARLY TEAM INVOLVEMENT

Debriefings are time sensitive; preparations for debriefings should begin before proposal evaluations are complete. Usually, the proposal evaluation board will assist in preparing debriefing charts and conducting the debriefing. Accordingly, at the time the evaluation board is formed, the evaluators should be informed that their duties include assisting with debriefings.

4.1.4 PREREQUISITES FOR PROPERLY CONDUCTING A DEBRIEFING:

- Government personnel attending the debriefing should be briefed on their roles and expected demeanor during the debriefing. Argumentative or overly defensive conduct should be discouraged, and Government personnel should be instructed to make a positive presentation.
- The following factors should be looked at early on during the acquisition process to avoid possible pitfalls. Waiting until you receive a request for debriefing is too late:
 1. A good source selection plan;
 2. A well-documented evaluation of the offeror's proposal, citing both good and bad points (strengths and weaknesses); and
 3. A knowledgeable and strong chairperson for the technical evaluation committee.

4.1.5 DEBRIEFING MATERIAL

Normally, debriefing materials consist of briefing charts and notes prepared for use during the debriefing. The PCOs should ensure that necessary notes or other documents are accessible during the debriefing. Government personnel should NOT bring proposals or evaluation reports of other offerors' into the debriefing room. In addition, for pre award debriefings, the government's technical evaluation report of the unsuccessful offeror's proposal, business clearance memorandum, and the



unsuccessful offeror's technical/cost proposal should be available; faulty memory or misstatements by Government personnel are detrimental to a successful debriefing.

4.2 Scheduling and Debriefing

It is extremely important that the Government schedule a debriefing on the earliest possible date after receipt of the request from the offeror. The contracting officer should notify the offeror of the scheduled date in writing, with immediate acknowledgement requested. If the debriefing is for an unsuccessful offeror, the notice should request the unsuccessful offeror to submit their questions or concerns in writing in advance of the scheduled debrief, for review by the government team. If the offeror is unable to attend the scheduled date and requests a later date, the offeror should be required to acknowledge, in writing, that it was offered an earlier date, but requested the later date instead. This procedure serves to protect the Government's interest in the event the offeror subsequently files protest. Note: The 10-day protest clock does not begin until the day the offeror is debriefed.

4.3 Conducting the Debriefing

The PCO should normally chair any debriefing session(s), with individuals who conducted the evaluations providing support. In other words, the PCO is not responsible for conducting the entire debriefing, but may rely on Government technical and cost/price personnel to present the portions of the debriefing that address those specialized areas of the offeror's proposal. The PCO's Office of Legal Counsel may also attend the debriefing, as well as assist in preparations for the debriefing. PCOs may conduct debriefings orally or in writing. If the debriefing is face to face, always have an attendance record, signed by everyone present at the debriefing.

4.3.1 AT A MINIMUM FOR PRE-AWARD

Pre-award debriefing information SHALL disclose the agency's evaluation of the proposal's significant elements, the rationale for exclusion, and reasonable responses to relevant questions about the source selection process. Pre-award debriefings should not include the number, identity, ranking, content or evaluation of any proposals, nor should it include any of the information prohibited by [FAR 15.506\(e\)](#). The required minimum information to be included in a debriefing in addition to what shall not be disclosed is outlined in [FAR 15.505\(e\)-\(g\)](#) and [FAR 15.506](#) and [NMCARS 5215.505 and 506](#).

4.3.2 AT A MINIMUM FOR POST AWARD

Post award debriefing information SHALL include the Government's evaluation of any significant weaknesses in the offeror's proposal, the evaluated cost or price and any technical rating of the successful offeror and the debriefed offeror, and past performance information on the debriefed offeror, the overall ranking of all offerors when any ranking was developed by the agency during the source selection, a summary of the rationale for award, the make and model of any applicable commercial item to be delivered by the successful offeror; and reasonable responses to relevant questions about the source selection process. The required minimum information to be included in a debriefing in addition to what shall not be disclosed is outlined in [FAR 15.505\(e\)-\(g\)](#) and [FAR 15.506](#) and [NMCARS 5215.505 and 506](#).

4.3.3 GUIDELINES FOR INFORMATION TO BE DISCLOSED

- If a weakness was significant enough concern to warrant its discussion during the negotiation phase of the acquisition, it should be included for debriefing purposes as well. Whereas, if it was not significant enough to warrant discussion, it is not significant for debriefing purposes either, unless the



weakness was created in the final proposal revision. It is also a good practice to discuss the significant advantages of the debriefed offeror's proposal.

- The total proposed and evaluated cost/price of the unsuccessful offeror's proposal should be disclosed for each contract line item (CLIN), and an explanation should be given for any significant cost realism adjustments made by the Government at the major cost element level. However, it may be a good business practice not to disclose the specific Government cost/price adjustments to the awardee's proposed cost/price (especially in a Cost type contract). PCO's may use their discretion here.
- If the evaluation board used adjectival ratings, the adjectives and their definitions contained in the evaluation plan should be disclosed. Likewise, if numerical ratings or color codes were used instead, they should also be disclosed.
- If the source selection authority ranked the proposals, the overall ranking of all proposals must be revealed at the post-award debriefings. However, the identities of the other unsuccessful offerors should not be revealed. Rather, those offerors should be referred to by alphanumeric letter or other designators.
- The Government should disclose a summary of the rationale for the contract award decision at post-award debriefings, identifying the significant advantages of the awardee's proposal in general terms, without revealing confidential proprietary information contained in the awardee's proposal.
- If the awardee's proposal includes a commercial item as an end item under the contract, the make and model of the item must be disclosed.
- Reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and other applicable authorities were followed.
- Under certain circumstances, additional information may be released, such as the final overall ratings for non-cost factors and/or the final total evaluated cost/price of the other unsuccessful offerors. Release of the overall non-cost rating is discretionary. However, release of the total final evaluated cost/price is limited to those situations where an unsuccessful offeror consents or the agency determines that the unsuccessful offeror, after consulting with it, would not suffer competitive harm from such a release. The decision to release any of this information should be made on a case-by-case basis with guidance from legal counsel.

4.3.4 WHAT CANNOT BE DISCLOSED DURING POST-AWARD DEBRIEFINGS

A post-award debriefing shall NOT include point-by-point comparisons of the debriefed offeror's proposal with those of other offerors. In addition, post-award debriefings shall NOT disclose information that is exempt from release under the [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#), relating to:

- Trade secrets;
- Privileged or confidential manufacturing processes and techniques;
- Commercial and financial information that is privileged or confidential, including cost breakdowns, profits, indirect cost/rates, and similar information; and
- Names of individuals providing reference information about an offeror's past performance.

4.4 Debriefing the Awardee

Although debriefing an awardee is similar in many respects to debriefing an unsuccessful offeror, the one significant difference is that very little information is revealed regarding the proposals of the unsuccessful offerors.



4.5 Debriefing Outline

See [Toolbox](#).

4.6 Debriefing Memorandum

4.6.1 CONTRACT FILE

In accordance with [FAR 15.506\(f\)](#), an official summary of the debriefing shall be included in the contract file.

4.6.2 DEBRIEFING MEMORANDUM IMPORTANCE

The debriefing memorandum shall be provided in as much detail as possible. Good debriefing memoranda are essential if the acquisition is reopened or re-solicited as a result of a protest or otherwise, within one (1) year of the contract award date. In such circumstances, the law requires that the contracting agency make available to all offerors information regarding the proposal of the awardee that was provided to other offerors at debriefings on the prior contract. This requirement is designed, in part, to place all offerors on a level playing field.

4.6.3 DEBRIEFING MEMORANDUM CONTENTS

The debriefing memorandum should include at a minimum:

- A list of all persons who attended the debriefing.
- A summary of the information disclosed during the briefing. The most efficient means for doing this is to identify the charts that were used at the debriefing and attach a copy of them to the memorandum.
- The substance of all questions and answers discussed at the debriefing, including answers provided after the debriefing.

4.6.4 SIGNATURES

Both the technical and procurement Government representatives should sign the debriefing minutes (debriefing memorandum).

4.7 Site-Specific Procedures

4.7.1 SSC ATLANTIC

Pre-Award Module 23 and Pre & Post Debriefings. In addition, when formal source selection procedures are used, debriefing slides WILL be prepared for all unsuccessful offerors and transmitted to the offeror with its unsuccessful notification. The offeror may still request a debrief; however, the transmission of this information with the notices to unsuccessful offerors will significantly reduce the request for formal debriefs.

4.7.2 SSC PACIFIC

In addition, when formal source selection procedures are used, debriefing slides MAY be prepared for all unsuccessful offerors and transmitted to the offeror with its unsuccessful notification. The offeror may still request a debrief; however, the transmission of this information with the notices to unsuccessful offerors will significantly reduce the request for formal debriefs.

5. APPROVALS

N/A

6. TOOLBOX

1. ["Mythbusting": Addressing Misconceptions to Improve Communications with Industry during the Acquisition Process](#), DASN(AP) Apr 2011
2. [Debriefing Outline](#)
3. [SSC-Pacific Sample Debrief Hand Out](#)
4. [SSC-Atlantic Unsuccessful Debrief Slides](#)



- 5.  [SSC-Atlantic Sample Debriefing Slides](#)
- 6.  [SSC-Atlantic Sample Debriefing Memo](#)

7. CHANGE HISTORY

Updated material is highlighted by *purple text* and an Alert/New  icon.

Date	Description of Changes
June 2016	Content formatted and reorganized; links updated.
September 2012	Last version created in old format. No change notes available.