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LOWEST PRICE, TECHNICALLY ACCEPTABLE EVALUATION CRITERIA USED IN THE NOVEMBER 2014 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR THE PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICE SOLDIER SYSTEMS ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (SETA) CONTRACT

September 2017

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This project examines the use of a lowest price technically acceptable (LPTA) source selection method of evaluation by analyzing actual evaluation criteria. The project analyzed aspects of the evaluation process for replies received in response to a request for proposal (RFP) for systems engineering and technical assistance (SETA) support. This was an objective analysis of the risks associated with the U.S. government's (USG) use of LPTA for a specific SETA contracting effort.

The authors reviewed guidance and policy from USG entities on the appropriate use of LPTA. Evaluation criteria identified in other SETA contract efforts available through the Federal Business Opportunities website were compared against the solicitation. The analysis led to three distinct findings. First, the evaluation factors were not consistent and traceable to instructions, conditions, and notices to the bidders within the RFP. Second, the source selection evaluation criteria were not well defined. Third, there were gaps with regard to requirements of the contract.

Our recommendations include better defining "technically acceptable" and providing more guidance to the offerors with regard to the labor requirements and prerequisites. The authors also recommend the Government Services Administration (GSA) as a course of action for obtaining labor resources.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A&AS	Advisory and Assistance Services
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
AT&L	Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics
COM SVC	Communication Services
CPFF	Cost Plus Fixed Fee
CR R&D	Cost Reimbursement Research and Development
CR SUP	Cost Reimbursement Supply
CR SVC	Cost Reimbursement Service
DAG	Defense Acquisition Guidebook
DAS	Defense Acquisition System
DFARS	Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement
DOD	Department of Defense
DODI	Department of Defense Instruction
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FP R&D	Fixed Price Research and Development
FP SUP	Fixed Price Supply
FP SVC	Fixed Price Service
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GS	General Services
GSA	General Services Administration
IBR	Integrated Baseline Review
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity
IT	Information Technology
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
L-CAT	Labor Category
LPTA	Lowest Price Technically Acceptable
NAVAIR	Naval Air Systems Command
PdM	Product Manager
PEO	Program Executive Office
PM	Project Manager

PWS	Performance Work Statement
RFP	Request for Proposal
RSM	Resume Scoring Matrix
SETA	Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance
SPIE	Soldier Protection and Individual Equipment
SSL	Soldier Sensors and Lasers
SW	Soldier Weapons
SWAR	Soldier Warrior
T&M LH	Time and Materials/Labor Hours
UCF	Uniform Contract Format
USG	United States Government
USD(AT&L)	Under Secretary of Defense Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
VATEP	Value Adjusted Total Evaluated Price

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research project examines the use of the lowest price technically acceptable (LPTA) source selection evaluation method to acquire systems engineering and technical assistance (SETA) support for a Department of Defense acquisition organization. The authors conducted the analysis by reviewing the solicitation for Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier SETA support released in November 2014 by the Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground (ACC-APG). The PEO Soldier SETA solicitation used the LPTA source selection method to evaluate proposals received in response to the solicitation.

The PEO Soldier SETA requirement involved 504 full-time equivalent positions to support the development and acquisition of commodities ranging from clothing and textiles to individual weapon systems, mobile handheld computing systems, sensors, and night vision devices. Based on the requirement, the process involved selecting an industry partner with a workforce technically competent to address areas specific to certain core competencies for the very diverse portfolio.

This project does not include a recommendation for policy adjustments or changes with respect to SETA source selection processes. The project's scope provides an objective analysis of the risks associated with the use of an LPTA evaluation approach to select an industry partner for a SETA effort. The risks found in the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation were identified and presented with subsequent recommended mitigation.

The authors contrasted the subjective tradeoff with the LPTA process as evaluation methods to ensure those specific qualifications were properly vetted. Two other SETA RFPs from the Army and Air Force were researched and compared against the PEO Soldier proposal and revealed differences and similarities between the source selection evaluation approaches used to evaluate proposals. A common denominator for all three was to evaluate "technical" as one of the evaluation factors.

Two primary and one secondary question were answered by the analysis. The primary questions addressed the impacts on the evaluation criteria and what elements of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP added to the risk of using LPTA as the source selection

evaluation method. Focus was on the misalignment of sections L and M for the technical factors and sub-factors within the solicitation: was the number of resumes required for submission adequate for evaluation, and was a lack of granularity in the position descriptions an issue? Changes that could have been made throughout the process to reduce the risk associated with using the LPTA source selection evaluation method were considered as a secondary question.

The authors present three distinct findings as a result of the research and analysis completed. First, section M was not consistent and traceable to section L within the RFP. Second, the source selection evaluation criteria in section M were not well defined. Third, there were gaps with regard to requirements of the contract

The authors have determined through analysis that there should be further research conducted beyond the scope of this project. Policy does not exist specific to acquiring SETA support. In addition, the analysis conducted with this project revealed the potential uniqueness of PEO Soldier's acquisition of SETA support based on its vast and diverse portfolio.

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I. INTRODUCTION

> Correct application of the [lowest priced technically acceptable] and trade-off source selection process to match our acquisition situation will ensure the Department will deliver the "best value" outcome for both the warfighter and taxpayer.
>
> —Frank Kendall (March 2015)

This chapter will provide a synopsis of the U. S. government's use of Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance (SETA) services to support the Department of Defense (DOD) mission, followed by an overview of source selection evaluation method options for a SETA contract. Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier's use of SETA contracts will be briefly discussed, followed by a summary of PEO Soldier's most recent SETA contracting effort that used a lowest price technically acceptable (LPTA) source selection evaluation method. This background information will reveal inherent risks in the use of LPTA as a source selection approach for a SETA effort that will be addressed in this research. A broad problem statement will lead to research objectives that will be investigated through specific research questions. This chapter also addresses the importance of this research and the project's research scope and methodology.

A. BACKGROUND

1. The Government's Use of SETA Support

Under today's challenging fiscal environment, many DOD acquisition organizations are limited to the number of personnel authorizations that can be filled for manning acquisition positions. Since most, if not all the positions within an acquisition organization, require specific technical expertise, SETA support is used frequently to augment the United States government (USG) workforce to meet the organization's mission. A SETA contract provides the USG with contractor personnel equipped with the technical expertise and knowledge to assist in addressing the needs of acquisition programs (Gansler, Lucyshyn, & Rigilano, 2012). SETA contractors can be embedded

within an acquisition organization, literally working side-by-side with USG personnel to solve program management and engineering challenges.

A SETA contract gives the USG the flexibility to acquire products ranging from combat boots to an aircraft carrier without the long-term commitment and expense of employing an all-government workforce. Typical functional areas that leverage SETA support to complete an acquisition organization's mission include, but are not limited to: program management, engineering, quality assurance, test, logistics, fielding, operations, and office administration. This wide variety of functional areas highlights the diversity of skill sets sought through a SETA effort.

2. Source Selection Process Options for a SETA Effort

The DOD requires its officials to act in the best interest of the public and has issued guidance on the competitive source selection process to ensure procedures result in "quality and timely products and services to the Warfighter and the Nation at the best value to the taxpayer" (DOD, 2016, p. 1). While it is clearly stated on paper, meeting the intent of "best interest" during actual contracting efforts between the USG and private industry becomes increasingly complicated. Identifying the means of selecting an industry partner to meet the needs of the USG is critical to acquiring the quality and timely products and/or services at the best value. The DOD has provided documented source selection procedures to be followed in accordance with the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) sub-part 215.3 to ensure procedures are consistent within the department.

The program manager, in concert with the contracting officer, must work to ensure the appropriate source selection evaluation method is used for a specific acquisition. The DOD source selection guide (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics [OUSD[AT&L]], 2016) includes a table of factors for consideration in the choice of a source selection evaluation method, as shown in Table 1. These factors include, but are not limited to, technical performance subjectivity/objectivity, risk, and cost.

Table 1. Source Selection Process Considerations. Source: DOD DPAP (2016).

	Subjective Technical Factor(s) Required	**Objective / Measurable Technical Factor(s) Required**	**Performance Risk Evaluation Required**	**Lowest Evaluated Cost / Price = Best Value**	**Monetized Requirements**	**Best Value Tradeoff**
Subjective Tradeoff	Yes	Possible	Yes	Possible	Possible	Yes
Value Adjusted Total Evaluated Price(VATEP) Tradeoff	Possible	Yes (See para. B.2)	Yes	Possible	Yes	Yes
LPTA	No	Yes (Acceptable / Unacceptable See Table C-1)	Evaluated with Technical Factor for acceptability only (see Para. 2.3.4.2.1)	Yes	No	No

As shown in Table 1, the USG must consider different factors before selecting a source selection method to support the acquisition of goods or services. The acquisition of SETA support can be accomplished using the same source selection processes and procedures available to procure any number of tangible products as basic as a pair of combat boots or as complex as an aircraft carrier. Two commonly used source selection processes to competitively acquire products and services under a best value approach are subjective tradeoff and LPTA. While both processes are available for use, each carries advantages and disadvantages.

a. The Subjective Tradeoff Process

Mandatory evaluation factors for each solicitation are technical, cost, and past performance. Depending on which method (subjective tradeoff, VATEP, LPTA) the USG is utilizing to select a vendor, the amount of detail describing the minimum technical requirements will vary. Regardless of the evaluation method used, the USG is required to identify the relative importance of the three factors (technical, cost, and past performance) to include sub-factors, if applicable. For example, in a subjective tradeoff scenario, the USG might specify the technical factor is significantly more important than cost, and cost is more important than past performance. Defining the relative importance of the factors as such, provides prospective offerors the opportunity to focus their efforts on a solid technical proposal and to focus less on cost and past performance.

The USG can further define available trade space within the evaluation factors by defining the relative importance of sub-factors and/or including rating discriminator criteria. For example, within the technical factor, the USG might define a rating discriminator based on range, as shown in Table 2. If an offeror's proposal includes a commitment to deliver a materiel solution with a 1,550 meter target recognition range in clear conditions, the offer would receive a "significant strength" rating.

Table 2. Example Range Evaluation Criteria

Target Recognition Range	Discriminator Toward Rating
≥ 1,500 meters in clear conditions	significant strength
≥ 600 meters to < 1,499 meters in clear conditions	strength
≥ 400 meters to < 599 meters in clear conditions	acceptable
< 300 meters in clear conditions	unacceptable

Based on the example criteria shown in Table 2, prospective offerors can make a tradeoff determination to best position themselves for consideration for an award by balancing the cost, schedule, technical performance, and risk aspects of their proposed solution to meet the USG's requirements.

The advantages of the subjective tradeoff process can be described in performance risk, pay for performance, or lowest cost/price. When the risk of failure is high, it may be in the USG's best interest to pay a higher cost to have an industry partner provide services or equipment. This may be in the form of a weapon system, or where the USG does not have the required technical knowledge or manpower to meet the needs of the program. For a physical object, the USG can define distinguishable metrics to define the available trade space as shown with the example criteria in Table 2. These objective measures are verifiable through measurement of sample hardware or the evaluation of technical details included in the offeror's proposal.

For a service, such as those provided through a SETA effort, this process becomes more difficult. The evaluation of a skill set becomes more subjective, especially when examining a broad range of personnel sought by the USG. Describing the requirements of more than ten labor categories becomes increasingly difficult when an engineer, for example, is required. The USG must clearly define the type of engineer needed (e.g., electrical, mechanical, optical), otherwise, the skill set offered may not align with the USG's needs. A requirement loosely defined and/or difficult to measure adds a significant amount of risk to the USG and selected offeror(s) during contract execution.

b. The LPTA Process

In an LPTA source selection evaluation, an offeror's proposal must receive a rating of acceptable based on all of the non-price factors to be eligible for an award. Receiving an unacceptable rating in any of the non-price factors removes the offeror's proposal from award consideration. Ultimately, the lowest priced offer evaluated as acceptable is awarded the contract.

The advantages of LPTA can be described in terms of cost and technical performance risk. An acceptable rating during the evaluation process yields a product that meets the USG's minimum requirements. As an example, for a services contract to provide lawn care for an installation, if an offeror provides a proposal that meets the USG's requirement to mow a one-acre area of grass once every week, then there is no basis for the USG to pay for the offeror to mow the acre of grass twice, within the same week.

The USG's willingness to accept the minimum requirement is also a disadvantage of using LPTA. For example, if the USG's stated requirement merely is for lawn mowing to be accomplished on a weekly basis, a company selected using the LPTA method might mow the lawn each week but leave the clippings on the sidewalk. A tradeoff process could have resulted in selecting a company that mows the lawn and removes the lawn clippings on a weekly basis.

3. Program Executive Office Soldier's Organizational Structure and the PEO Soldier SETA Request for Proposal from November 2014

The PEO Soldier website states the organization's mission is to develop, acquire, field, and sustain affordable state of the art equipment for our soldiers (PEO Soldier Mission, n.d.). The organization of PEO Soldier is depicted in Figure 1.

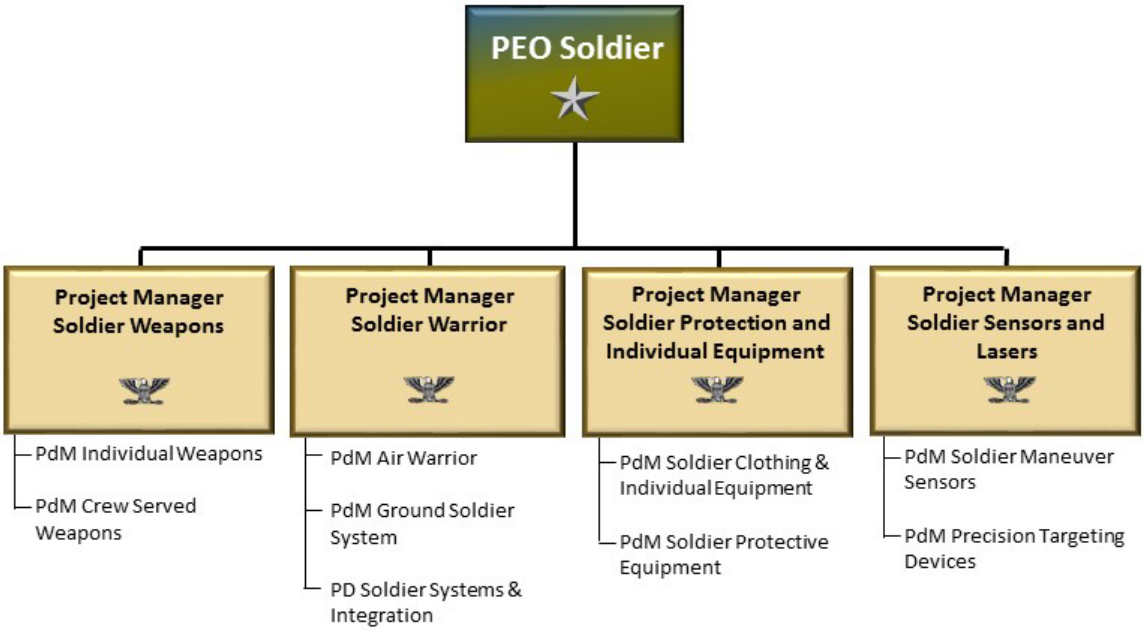

Figure 1. The PEO Soldier Organization Chart.
Source: PEO Soldier (2016).

As shown in Figure 1, the PEO Soldier portfolio is managed through four project managers (PMs) comprised of eight product managers (PdMs) and one project director (PEO Soldier Program Offices, n.d.). PM Soldier Weapons (PM SW) develops, produces, fields and sustains individual and crew-served weapons such as the M4 carbine, M110 Semi-Automatic Sniper System, and the M240 Medium Machine Gun to provide Soldiers with lethality overmatch capabilities. PM Soldier Warrior (PM SWAR) develops and integrates components into complete systems such as the Air Warrior and Ground Soldier to increase situational awareness and combat effectiveness. PM Soldier Protection and Individual Equipment (PM SPIE) develops and fields a wide variety of Soldier protection products such as protective body armor, uniforms for everyday use, and parachute systems for the individual soldier. Finally, PM Sensors and Lasers (PM SSL) develops and fields sensors and lasers such as night vision goggles, thermal weapon sights, and laser designators to enhance the soldier's ability to operate in all battlefield conditions, day or night (PEO Soldier Portfolio, n.d.).

The entire PEO Soldier organization is responsible for over 100 programs and 240 products spanning all five phases of the Defense Acquisition System (DAS): materiel solution analysis, technology maturation & risk reduction, engineering & manufacturing development, production & deployment, and operations & support. Due to the complexity, uniqueness, and sheer quantity of programs and products, PEO Soldier employs a large SETA workforce to augment the military and USG civilian workforce (PEO Soldier, 2014).

PEO Soldier released a SETA request for proposal (RFP) in November 2014 with multiple positions in the following functional areas: engineering, quality assurance, test, acquisition, business management, logistics, fielding, new equipment training, operations, facilities management, administration, and miscellaneous (ACC-APG, 2014). The projected quantity of full time equivalents (FTEs) sought through the SETA effort for PEO Soldier headquarters and the four PM organizations was presented in the PEO Soldier industry day brief and is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Breakdown of FTE Needs by Office within the PEO Soldier Organization

Office	**FTEs**
PEO Soldier	63
PM SW	47
PM SWAR	111
PM SPIE	189
PM SSL	94
Total	504

As shown in Table 3, all five offices within the PEO Soldier organization had a need for SETA support. The PEO Soldier SETA contract was structured as a five-year effort with one base year and four option years. The USG's plan was to use the LPTA

source selection evaluation method to support the award of a single cost plus fixed fee (CPFF) contract (ACC-APG, 2014).

4. Memorandum from the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics

On 4 March 2015, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD(AT&L)), Frank Kendall, issued a memorandum providing the appropriate use of LPTA as a source selection evaluation method. Some would interpret the memo as a directive to use LPTA as an all-inclusive source selection tool, regardless of the type of contract and procurement objective. Another interpretation of the memo's purpose is LPTA was being misused as a source selection tool and the USD(AT&L) wanted to clarify when LPTA should be considered for use. Based on the different interpretations of the same memorandum issued with the intent of providing guidance on the appropriate use of LPTA as a source selection evaluation method, a detailed examination of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP that used the LPTA source selection evaluation method to award a contract is presented in the remainder of this paper.

5. Summary

This section presented the background information on the DOD's use of SETA services to support the mission requirements of an acquisition organization and an overview of two source selection evaluation methods for a SETA contract, the subjective tradeoff process and the LPTA process. PEO Soldier's use of SETA contracts, including an RFP for SETA services issued in November 2014, was briefly discussed. Finally, the 4 March 2015 memorandum from the USD(AT&L) on the subject of the appropriate use of LPTA as a source selection evaluation method was introduced. An examination of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP from November 2014 through the lens of the memo from the USD(AT&L) on the appropriate use of LPTA as a source selection evaluation method comprises the basis of this research project.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Proposals received in response to a competitive USG RFP must be effectively evaluated to the requirements of the solicitation. The evaluation must use a well-defined process to ensure delivery of a quality and timely product at the best value for the customer, and other stakeholders, such as the taxpayer. As stated in the subjective tradeoff process narrative earlier in this report, capturing the trade space in the USG's requirement for a measurable and objective requirement is a deliberate, but challenging process. Capturing the trade space in a requirement for technical services under a SETA effort is perhaps even more difficult.

Use of LPTA can eliminate this obstacle, however it introduces what could arguably be a more difficult challenge: what defines "technically acceptable" for SETA support? Any misstep in clearly and accurately defining "technically acceptable" adds risk to the USG because offerors competing to augment the acquisition workforce can meet the USG's goal of meeting the minimum requirement at the lowest price, however if the minimum requirement is poorly defined, the mission may suffer, or opportunities to receive performance above the requirement may be missed. If the use of LPTA continues to support source selections for SETA contracts, the true definition of "technically acceptable" must be well documented and understood.

C. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research is to present an analysis of the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation from November 2014 to reveal risks associated with using LPTA as the source selection evaluation method for an effort where technical expertise is the primary deliverable. To support this objective, the evaluation criteria for the PEO Soldier SETA contract will be discussed and the risks associated with the definition of "technically acceptable" included in the solicitation will be identified.

The secondary objective of this research is to identify how the risks with the definition of "technically acceptable" could have been mitigated for the PEO Soldier SETA RFP. Research conducted on other USG SETA solicitations and other DOD policy and guidance on source selection procedures and processes relevant to a SETA effort will

also be presented to address the project's research objectives. These additional researched resources will assist in identifying proposed mitigation for the risks found within the PEO Soldier SETA RFP, with the goal of reducing risk to future SETA solicitations.

D. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Primary and secondary research questions were developed in response to the research objectives presented in the preceding section. The data and analysis, and findings relevant to each question will be presented in chapters III and IV, respectively. Conclusions drawn from answering the research questions will be discussed in chapter V.

1. Primary Research Questions

The primary research questions pertain to the use of LPTA as a source selection process for the PEO Soldier SETA contract.

Primary Research Question 1: What are the impacts on source selection evaluation criteria when LPTA is used as a source selection evaluation method for a SETA effort?

Primary Research Question 2: What elements of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP added risk to the decision to use LPTA as the source selection evaluation method?

2. Secondary Research Questions

During investigation of the primary research questions, a secondary research question was generated relevant to this research.

Secondary Research Question: What changes could have been made to the PEO Soldier SETA RFP to reduce the risk of using LPTA as the source selection method?

E. PURPOSE/BENEFIT

This section presents the purpose of this research effort by examining the Army and Air Force reliance on SETA support, followed by an explanation of how this research will benefit future SETA contracting efforts.

The November 2014 solicitation for SETA support for PEO Soldier is not a unique requirement. In fact, the November 2014 solicitation is the sixth such effort issued by the USG for PEO Soldier (PEO Soldier, 2014). In researching this effort, two other SETA solicitations were found that will be discussed later in this project, including one for another Army acquisition organization and one for the Air Force.

The United States 114 Congress second session proposed Bill S.2826 in April 2016 focusing on the appropriate use of LPTA as a source selection method to the Armed Services Committee for review. Bill S.2826 further requires the DOD to amend the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation "to avoid using Lowest Price Technically Acceptable source selection criteria in inappropriate circumstances that potentially deny the Department the benefits of cost and technical tradeoffs in the source selection process" (114th Congress, 2016, pp. 1–2).

Considering PEO Soldier and other DOD acquisition organizations will continue to rely on SETA support, the benefit of this project is an objective look at the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation from November 2014 and the use of the LPTA source selection evaluation methodology. The authors identified several items that may be used for future solicitations to better define the selection criteria, separate those potential offerors proposing superior talent for SETA efforts, and achieve the most appropriate means to select a SETA support contractor.

F. SCOPE METHODOLOGY

This research will focus on the impact to source selection criteria for a SETA effort when an LPTA source selection evaluation method is selected and will concentrate on specific elements of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP that added risk to the decision to use LPTA as the source selection evaluation method.

Identification of the risk areas in the PEO Soldier SETA RFP and recommended mitigation for the risks will be accomplished through comparison of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP with other SETA RFPs and applicability of published guidance on service contracts and the LPTA source selection evaluation method available in the Federal

Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and from other DOD offices found through an extensive literature review.

The data used for this research was limited to approved documentation related to the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA RFP and does not include any proposal information received from offerors in response to the RFP. Other SETA RFPs used for research data were found through fedbizopps.gov. The researchers of this project recognize the FAR is the regulatory document for federal executive agencies to acquire supplies and services, but acknowledge other resources, such as the Defense Acquisition Guidebook (DAG), contain guidance on service contracting and were researched and used for this project.

G. THESIS STATEMENT

This research will analyze and determine the appropriateness of using LPTA as a source selection evaluation method for a SETA effort by examining the impact to the source selection evaluation criteria and analyzing both the risks and recommended mitigation for those risks from the PEO Soldier SETA RFP that used an LPTA source selection approach. Considering the source selection methods available to support a competitive acquisition are the same, regardless of whether the product sought is a tangible item such as an aircraft carrier or a pair of combat boots, or a service such as those provided through a SETA effort, LPTA can be considered as a source selection evaluation method, but associated risks must be identified and mitigated appropriately.

H. REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides pertinent background information, leading to a problem statement, research objectives, and associated primary and secondary research questions. Chapter II discusses the literature used to support this study. Chapter III presents the data gathered from the researched literature and the analysis used to answer both the primary and secondary research questions stated in chapter I. Chapter IV discusses the findings from the analysis of the data. Chapter V includes conclusions and provides suggestions for additional research.

I. SUMMARY

This chapter provided a synopsis of the DOD's use of SETA services to support an acquisition organization's mission, an overview of options available for a source selection evaluation of a SETA effort, and a discussion of PEO Soldier's use of LPTA as the source selection evaluation approach for the SETA RFP from November 2014. A problem statement was introduced followed by the introduction of research objectives that will be investigated through specific research questions. The importance of this research was presented, and the scope and methodology used for the research was discussed. Finally, the thesis statement for this research was defined. The next chapter will discuss the literature resources used in this research effort.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter I provided an introduction for this research by presenting the background information that culminated in the issues addressed by this research's objectives. This chapter will explain the literature researched for this project. First, we will examine the USG's primary documentation used for the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation. Next, we will examine documentation from other DOD SETA solicitations. Finally, we will examine published guidance in the FAR and from various DOD offices on the acquisition of services and will discuss applicability of the guidance to the PEO Soldier SETA RFP.

A. SOLICITATION DOCUMENTS FROM THE NOVEMBER 2014 PEO SOLDIER SETA RFP

The November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation was supported by a variety of documents. Some of the documents captured the USG's approach and contracting strategy. Additional documents were used to communicate the requirements for the effort to industry, while other critical documents supported the evaluation of proposals received from industry partners interested in competing for the work.

The documents from the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation researched for this project include the acquisition strategy, the acquisition plan, the industry day brief, and the solicitation itself that included both the performance work statement (PWS) and the cost model for the effort.

The acquisition strategy is required by DODI 5000.02 and is dated 11 August 2014. Per enclosure 2, paragraph 6.a.(1) of DODI 5000.02, the acquisition strategy documents the PEO's comprehensive and integrated plan for program execution across the entire program life cycle and identifies the acquisition approach and assumptions. The acquisition strategy for the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation specifically addresses the effort's requirements, risks, competition, implications, business arrangement, multi-year contracts, leases, and metrics (PEO Soldier, 2014).

The acquisition plan is required by the FAR sub-part 7.1 and is dated 8 July 2014. The acquisition plan defines the specific actions needed to execute the approach as described in the approved acquisition strategy. The acquisition plan for the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation specifically addresses the acquisition background and objectives for the effort including the statement of need, cost, delivery/performance, trade-offs, and risks. The acquisition plan also discusses sources, competition, contract type selection, source selection procedures, acquisition considerations, budgeting and funding, product/service descriptions, and contract administration for the effort (PEO Soldier, 2014).

The PEO Soldier overview for industry day briefing is dated 3 April 2014. PEO Soldier hosted an industry day event for the SETA solicitation to provide interested offerors with awareness of the PEO Soldier organization, mission, and products. The event included an open forum discussion of the effort's requirements and one-on-one sessions with prospective offerors. Specific information covered in the industry day briefing included overviews of PEO Soldier headquarters and the four PM offices shown in Figure 1 in chapter I, the systems/items acquired by each PM office, and the projected number of 504 FTEs for the contract captured in Table 3 of this project.

The PEO Soldier SETA solicitation was released to industry on 26 November 2014 under solicitation W91CRB-15-R-0005. The solicitation was amended four times with amendment 1 occurring on 26 November 2014, amendment 2 occurring on 23 December 2014, amendment 3 occurring on 8 January 2015, and amendment 4 occurring on 15 January 2015. The amended RFP includes sections A through C and E through M of the Uniform Contract Format (UCF) (ACC-APG, 2014). As stated in chapter I, the USG's goal was to award a single CPFF contract using the LPTA source selection process.

The PWS for the PEO Soldier SETA effort was included in section C of the RFP. This 67-page document captures the scope, performance requirements, special requirements, and deliverables for the effort. The PWS also defines the formal reviews and reporting requirements for the work and provides position descriptions for the

various labor categories (L-CATs) that define the required skill sets an offeror would need to provide to meet the solicitation's performance requirements (ACC-APG, 2014).

The cost model for the PEO Soldier SETA effort was identified as an attachment to the RFP in section J and is a spreadsheet offerors were instructed to complete as part of their cost/price proposal. Offerors were informed the provided cost data would be evaluated for fairness, reasonableness, and cost realism. The spreadsheet includes tabs for labor for PEO Soldier, PM SW, PM SWAR, PM SPIE, PM SSL for all required FTEs in the base year and four option years, overhead direct costs, indirect costs, fringe benefits, and general & administrative expenses (ACC-APG, 2014).

B. SOLICITATION DOCUMENTS FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT SETA EFFORTS

Two other USG SETA solicitations were researched for this project to compare and contrast with the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation; an Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) SETA effort and an Army Product Manager (PdM) Radars SETA effort. This comparison will be discussed in Chapters III and IV.

The AFSOC SETA Solicitation was intended to augment the Headquarters (HQ) AFSOC organic (military and civil service) capabilities by acquiring intellectual capital support for program management, engineering, operations, training, and logistics. The AFSOC SETA effort was released to industry on 17 April 2015 under solicitation FA0021-15-R-0004. The AFSOC SETA solicitation was amended five times with amendment 1 occurring on 4 May 2015, amendment 2 occurring on 11 May 2015, amendment 3 occurring on 13 May 2015, amendment 4 occurring on 19 May 2015, and amendment 5 occurring on 21 May 2015. The amended RFP includes sections A through M of the UCF. The 21-page PWS for the effort is identified as an attachment to section C of the RFP. The USG intended to award three effective firm fixed price (FFP) contracts and two "on-ramp" awards, utilizing the LPTA source selection evaluation method (765th Specialized Contracting Flight, 2015).

The PdM Radars SETA solicitation was intended to acquire contractor-provided support in the areas of program management, engineering, business management,

operations, fielding, new equipment training, and logistics. The PdM Radars SETA effort was released to industry on 9 March 2015 under solicitation W56KGY-16-R-0004. The PdM Radars SETA solicitation was amended three times with amendment 1 occurring on 1 April 2016, amendment 2 occurring on 5 April 2016, and amendment 3 occurring on 11 April 2016. The USG intended to award no more than one CPFF contract, utilizing the tradeoff source selection evaluation method (ACC-APG, n.d.).

C. ADDITIONAL PUBLISHED GUIDANCE PERTINENT TO THIS RESEARCH

Published guidance on the acquisition of services is wide and varied. Additional resources researched for this project include the FAR, department level and service specific source selection guidance, Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 5000.74, the Defense Acquisition Guidebook (DAG), and memorandums from the USD(AT&L).

1. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)

The FAR is the main regulation used by all federal executive agencies to acquire supplies and services with appropriated funding. The FAR contains 53 parts providing policy and guidance on subjects such as competition and acquisition planning, contracting methods and contract types, socioeconomic programs, contracting requirements, special categories of contracting, contract management, and clauses and forms. FAR part 37 specifically addresses service contracting in six sub-parts: 37.1–service contracts–general, 37.2–advisory and assistance service, 37.3–dismantling, demolition, or removal of improvements, 37.4–nonpersonal health care services, 37.5–management oversight of service contracts, and 37.6–performance based acquisition (FAR, 2012).

2. Department Level and Service Level Source Selection Guidance

The DOD originally released source selection procedures for use department-wide on 4 March 2011 to standardize the methodology and approaches used by the department to execute competitively negotiated source selections. A revised version of the DOD's

source selection procedures was released on 1 April 2016 and expanded the discussion on tradeoff and LPTA source selection procedures.

The Army and Air Force have each issued service-specific source selection guidance to supplement overarching federal and department guidance. The Army source selection supplement, dated 21 December 2012, supplements both the FAR and the DOD's source selection procedures (Department of the Army, 2012). The Air Force's supplemental source selection guidance is captured in Mandatory Procedure 5315.3 and was most recently revised on 3 June 2016 (Department of the Air Force, 2016). The Navy has not issued source selection guidance for all Navy acquisitions; however, the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) published NAVAIR Instruction 4200.39C on 16 December 2013 that applies to all best value negotiated, competitive acquisitions under FAR part 15, executed by NAVAIR (Department of the Navy, 2013). The NAVAIR mission provides full life-cycle support of naval aviation aircraft, weapons and systems operated by sailors and marines.

3. Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 5000.74

The DODI 5000.74–Defense Acquisition of Services, was issued by the USD(AT&L) and was effective 5 January 2016. The instruction establishes the DOD's policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides direction for the acquisition of contracted services. The instruction defines six service categories and the associated dollar limits and decision authority for each category (DOD, 2016). The researchers of this project recognize this instruction became effective after release of the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation in November 2014; however, it was useful to frame the overall goals of this research effort.

4. The Defense Acquisition Guidebook (DAG)

The DAG is an online tool from the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) with the intent of providing acquisition policy and discretionary best practice guidance. The DAG is comprised of 14 chapters covering topics such as program strategies, affordability, life-cycle logistics, test and evaluation, and program management activities (DAU, n.d.-a.). Chapter 14 of the DAG is dedicated to the acquisition of services.

5. Under Secretary of Defense Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) Memorandums

The USD(AT&L) issued a memorandum on 27 August 2012 to DOD acquisition executives updating the department's taxonomies for acquiring services and supplies & equipment. The memorandum identifies nine portfolio groups for services with a portfolio group called the knowledge based services, encompassing engineering and technical services, program management services, management support services, administrative & other services, professional services, and education & training (OUSD[AT&L]), 2012).

The USD(AT&L) issued a memorandum on 4 March 2015 to the Secretaries of the military departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other high-ranking DOD acquisition officials providing clarification and guidance on the appropriate use of LPTA to support source selections. The memorandum includes a reminder the DOD must select the appropriate source selection and contract type to deliver a solution with performance supporting achievement of a specific requirement that meets the warfighter's needs, at the lowest cost (OUSD[AT&L], 2015).

6. General Services Administration (GSA) Provides an Alternate Path to Acquiring SETA Support

The General Services Administration (GSA) is an independent USG agency providing other federal agencies with acquisition solutions for equipment, supplies, professional services, and technology services. Professional service areas available through the GSA include business administrative, financial and accounting, logistics and supply chain management, management advisory, and technical and engineering. Technology solutions available through the GSA include information technology (IT) services and software products and services.

The GSA has multiple contracts in place for federal agencies to obtain simple or complex services. The GSA's professional services schedule (PSS) is an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) multiple award schedule with more than 3,300 experienced contractors available at fixed prices or per labor hour (GSA, n.d.-c.).

GSA's one acquisition solution for integrated services (OASIS) is another IDIQ contract available to acquire program management, management consulting, logistics, engineering, scientific, and financial services (GSA, n.d.-b.). The GSA's IT Schedule 70 provides access to over 5,000 vendors offering an expansive variety of IT products and services (GSA, n.d.-a.).

7. Lack of Specific Policy/Guidance on the Acquisition of SETA

Research completed for this project indicates SETA contracts are not explicitly addressed in the FAR; however, the Procedures, Guidance, and Information, a companion resource for the DFARS, references the 27 August 2012 memo from the USD(AT&L) that identifies the following services falling under the knowledge based service umbrella: engineering & technical services, program management services, management support services, administrative and other services, professional services, and education & training (OUSD[AT&L], 2012). SETA support appears to fit within the categories of knowledge based services, however knowledge based services are also not explicitly addressed in the FAR.

Appendix C of chapter 14 of the DAG addresses the acquisition of services and connects knowledge based services to advisory and assistance services (A&AS), one of many areas identified as a service requirement (Defense Acquisition University (DAU, n.d.-a.). A&AS are discussed In FAR part 37, service contracting. FAR sub-part 37.2 identifies A&AS as "a legitimate way to improve Government services and operations. Accordingly, [A&AS] may be used at all organizational levels to help managers achieve maximum effectiveness or economy in their operations" (FAR, Sub-part 37.203, para. (a)). This FAR definition of A&AS aligns with a SETA effort and the association of SETA as a knowledge based service.

FAR sub-part 37.1 identifies performance-based acquisition as "the preferred method for acquiring services" (FAR, Sub-part 37.102, para. (a)) and also identifies the following order of precedence to obtain the services:

1) A firm-fixed price performance-based contract or task order.
2) A performance-based contract or task order that is not firm-fixed price.

3) A contract or task order that is not performance-based.

While the PEO Soldier SETA contract RFP did not explicitly identify the effort as "performance-based," the RFP includes elements associated with performance-based acquisition including use of a PWS, performance standards, and a quality assurance surveillance plan.

D. SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the literature and other resources researched for this project. The USG's primary documentation used for the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation was discussed, followed by a summary of documentation from other USG SETA solicitations, including an AFSOC SETA RFP and a PdM Radars SETA RFP. This chapter also discussed published guidance in the FAR and from various DOD and other USG entities on the acquisition of services and the use of the LPTA source selection evaluation method. The next chapter will present the data and analysis found in the literature and resources presented in this chapter to address the primary and secondary research questions stated in Chapter I.

III. DATA AND ANALYSIS

This chapter will present the data and analysis used to answer both the primary and secondary research questions stated in Chapter I. The two primary research questions focus on the impacts to the source selection evaluation criteria and the elements of the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation that added risk to the effort based on the decision to use an LPTA source selection evaluation method to evaluate submitted proposals. The data and analysis for the primary research questions are included in Section A. The secondary research question assists in determining how the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation could have reduced the risk of using the LPTA source selection evaluation method to evaluate proposals received in response to the RFP. The data and analysis for the secondary research question is included in Section B.

A. PRIMARY RESEARCH: IMPACTS ON SOURCE SELECTION CRITERIA AND ELEMENTS OF RISK IN THE NOVEMBER 2014 PEO SOLDIER SETA SOLICITATION

Applying the "best value continuum" requires an understanding of FAR 15.101. FAR 15.101 provides a description of source selection approaches and techniques that may be used in the selection of an offeror to provide services, expertise, or equipment based on the USG's requirements. "Best value" selection methods include a tradeoff process and LPTA. With either method, the UCF is utilized as outlined in FAR part 15.201-1. The elements of the UCF are known as sections A through M and are divided into four parts, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Uniform Contract Format. Source: FAR, Part 15.201-1 (2012).

Section	Title
Part I—The Schedule	
A	Solicitation/contract form
B	Supplies or services and prices/costs
C	Description/specifications/statement of work
D	Packaging and marking
E	Inspection and acceptance
F	Deliveries or performance
G	Contract administration data
H	Special contract requirements
Part II—Contract Clauses	
I	Contract clauses
Part III—List of Documents, Exhibits, and Other Attachments	
J	List of attachments
Part IV—Representations and Instructions	
K	Representations, certifications, and other statements of offerors or respondents
L	Instructions, conditions, and notices to offerors or respondents
M	Evaluation factors for award

The UCF format shown in Table 4 provides a consistent manner to communicate and layout specific items between the USG and prospective offerors. Of specific importance to any USG solicitation are section L (instructions, conditions, and notices to offerors or respondents) and section M (evaluation factors for award) of the UCF.

Section L provides the specific administrative requirements describing how an offeror must respond to the solicitation. Some of these requirements may be administrative, such as prescribing the font type and size, to ensure all submitted proposals look similar, or page limits of the proposal. Section L will also define specific information required in an offeror's proposal, such as the requirement to include a technical volume detailing the offeror's technical approach to meeting the USG's requirements, or a cost volume with detailed pricing data. Section M informs offerors how submitted proposal material will be evaluated by the USG.

1. Sections L and M for the Technical Factor and Sub-factors

Section M of the November 2014 solicitation for PEO Soldier SETA support identifies the effort's evaluation factors and sub-factors as:

Factor 1: Technical

- Management approach (sub-factor 1)
- Corporate experience (sub-factor 2)
- Personnel approach (sub-factor 3)

Factor 2: Small business subcontracting plan (large business only)

Factor 3: Cost

- Narrative
- Cost matrix and all supporting documentation

Section M of the November 2014 solicitation for PEO Soldier SETA support also includes rating definitions for the technical factor and sub-factors as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Definitions of Technically Acceptable and Unacceptable Ratings. Source: ACC-APG (2014).

Rating	**Rating Description**
Acceptable	Proposal clearly demonstrates meeting the minimum requirements of the solicitation and as stated in Section L, submission requirements, provides thorough/detail and clear evidence of management, corporate experience and personnel capable of fulfilling the minimum requirements of the solicitation in the timelines required.
Unacceptable	Proposal does not clearly demonstrate meeting the minimum requirements of the solicitation in one or more sub-factors by failing to provide evidence as stated in Section L, submission requirements, which substantiates management approach, corporate experience and/or personnel capable of fulfilling the minimum requirements in the timelines required.

The rating definitions in Table 5 are consistent with an LPTA source selection evaluation method in that there are only two ratings: acceptable and unacceptable. To achieve an acceptable rating, the offeror is required to provide documentation in the

required format as listed within section L of the solicitation with clear evidence the offeror can meet the USG's minimum requirements within a prescribed timeline.

For the management approach sub-factor under the technical factor, several management approaches exist, including the scientific approach and the administrative approach. The scientific approach involves defining the problem, determining a thesis, running experiments, and identifying a conclusion. This approach, being event driven, does not align with the DOD's acquisition process. An administrative approach requires the day-to-day administration of the contract in terms of pay, leave, and benefits. Given that the PEO Soldier SETA contract consisted of more than 500 FTEs scattered across dozens of locations and the PEO Soldier mission, the administrative management approach would be reasonable for the PEO Soldier SETA effort.

For the corporate experience sub-factor under the technical factor, section L of the PEO Soldier SETA support solicitation defined the minimum qualifications in terms of contract size. To be eligible for an award, the offeror was required to provide documentation showing at least two years of experience within the last five years of managing at least one service contract with no fewer than 250 FTEs (ACC-APG, 2014).

For the personnel approach sub-factor under the technical factor, section L of the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation required offerors to include resumes in the proposal submission as a demonstration that they could provide the personnel to meet the USG's requirement. The key point within this section is the specification of the resumes to be submitted as part of the offeror's proposal:

> One (1) resume, not to exceed three (3) pages, for each of the following Key positions at the Category IV and/or V levels as indicated in the cost model: Program Management Director, Project Task Manager, Management/Program/Acquisition Analyst, Engineer/Scientist, Life Cycle Logistics Management Analyst, Technical Analyst, Software Engineer, and Budget Analyst. Summary narrative for the resumes: provided shall discuss how each key position candidate meets or exceeds the requirements of the PWS. (ACC-APG. 2014, p. 198)

The impact of this requirement will be discussed in the next section of this project.

By comparison, a review of the other SETA RFPs researched for this project and discussed in Chapter II, reveals different approaches for the evaluation factors and sub-factors for each effort, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. A Summary of Evaluation Factors for Three Different SETA RFPs.

Government Organization Seeking SETA Support	**PEO Soldier. Source: ACC-APG (2014).**	**PdM Radars. Source: ACC-APG (n.d.).**	**AFSOC. Source: 765th Specialized Contracting Flight (2015).**
Source Selection Evaluation Method	LPTA	Subjective Tradeoff	LPTA
Factor 1	Technical	Technical	Technical
Sub-factor 1	Management Approach	NA	Corporate Management Plan
Sub-factor 2	Corporate Experience	NA	Workforce Management Approach
Sub-factor 3	Personnel Approach	NA	Quality Control Plan
Sub-factor 4	NA	NA	Security Administration
Factor 2	Small Business Subcontracting Plan (Large Business Only)	Cost/Price	Past Performance
Factor 3	Cost/Price	Past Performance	Cost/Price
Sub-factor 1	Narrative	NA	NA
Sub-factor 2	Cost matrix and all supporting documentation	NA	NA
Factor 4	NA	Small Business Participation	NA

Despite the different factor and sub-factor evaluation approaches summarized in Table 6, all three efforts had technical as factor 1. Therefore, the authors of this research will discuss and compare only factor 1. The only other common factor between the three efforts is cost/price, the analysis of which would have required source-selection-sensitive material the authors were not able to obtain. The authors therefore assumed that the past performance and small business factors were not discriminators in the USG's evaluation of proposals received for any of the three solicitations.

Section L of the PEO Soldier solicitation defined three sub-factors under factor 1 technical: sub-factor 1. Management approach, sub-factor 2. Corporate experience, and sub-factor 3. Personnel approach. Under the sub-factors, the type, format, and content of 17 data points of information offerors were required to provide is defined. This information included a transition plan narrative, the subcontractor management approach, and a plan for staffing to 90% of total awarded level of effort. As discussed previously, section M of the PEO Soldier solicitation included the definitions of acceptable and unacceptable as captured in Table 5. Further review of section M did not reveal any specific evaluation criteria defining how an offeror's proposal would be evaluated to clearly and adequately determine the technical acceptability of the offer.

Comparatively, the AFSOC solicitation identified four sub-factors under factor 1 technical: sub-factor 1. Corporate management plan, sub-factor 2. Workforce management approach, sub-factor 3. Quality control plan, sub-factor 4. Security administration. Similar to the PEO Soldier solicitation, the type, format, and content of the information offerors were required to provide is defined in section L of the AFSOC solicitation. Section M of the AFSOC solicitation reveals a one-for-one alignment of the 22 data items proscribed in section L directly to section M evaluation criteria. Section L proposal content requirements and corresponding section M evaluation criteria for a sub-section of the corporate management plan sub-factor to the technical factor are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Alignment of Section L and Section M from the AFSOC SETA Solicitation. Adapted from 765th Specialized Contracting Flight (2015).

2.5. Technical – Subfactor 1, Corporate Management Plan	M0002 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND FACTORS
The Offeror shall submit a Corporate Management Plan covering the Prime and all Team Members. The Corporate Management Plan shall apply to all geographical locations. The Corporate Management Plan must demonstrate the team's capability and capacity to meet the requirements. The Corporate Management Plan shall include:	2.1.2. Measure of Merit: The Offeror must provide a Corporate Management Pla covering the Prime and all Team Members to cover all geographical locations. The Corporate Management Plan must demonstrate the team's capability and capacity to meet the requirements. This subfactor is met when the Offeror:
2.5.1. A description of internal corporate structures coupled with firm commitments with teaming members such as Teaming Arrangements and/or Letters of Intent or that describe a sound corporate and team structure that addresses reach back and management of multiple geographically dispersed task orders.	2.1.2.1. Demonstrates a sound corporate and/or team structure with sufficient depth and breadth to accomplish multiple geographically dispersed task orders The Offeror's approach describes all valid external corporate commitments between all parties, if applicable, that details business agreements such as Teaming arrangements and/or Letters of Intent. The corporate structure demonstrates an effective method to reach back to corporate Prime and Team Member knowledge bases to access additional expertise.
2.5.2. The Offeror's proposal shall also describe direct relationships between the senior leadership and management personnel assigned to this contract for efficient operations. The corporate structure must describe the area(s) of expertise and percentage of work to be performed by the prime and all teaming members for this requirement.	2.1.2.2. The Offeror demonstrates a corporate structure to ensure effective and efficient business operations of this contract with direct relationship between th senior leadership and management personnel assigned with the area(s) of expertise and percentage of work performed by the prime and all teaming members for this requirement. Offeror affirms the Prime contractor's responsibl for all aspects of the Team's performance.

The left-hand column of Table 7 includes proposal content requirements from section L, while the right-hand column is the proposal evaluation methodology from section M for a portion of the corporate management plan sub-factor of the technical factor for the AFSOC SETA solicitation. The black arrows in the table were added by the authors to show the one-to-one linkage between the proposal content required by section L and the evaluation methodology from section M. A complete table showing the one-to-one correlation between the section L proposal content requirements and corresponding section M evaluation criteria for the technical factor and all sub-factors for the AFSOC SETA effort is presented in Appendix A of this project.

The authors also reviewed the PdM Radars solicitation as it used a subjective tradeoff source selection evaluation method. The proposal content requirements from section L of the PdM Radars solicitation are similar to those of the PEO Soldier and AFSOC in that offerors are required to demonstrate the offeror's staffing plan. One significant difference in the PdM Radars solicitation is the offeror must describe and demonstrate they understand radar systems and the effort required to sustain them in the Army's operational environment (ACC-APG, n.d.), whereas the PEO Soldier solicitation does not require an offeror to demonstrate the proposed workforce understands the

technology or have familiarity with any of the programs or products within the PEO Soldier portfolio.

Typical of a subjective tradeoff source selection evaluation approach, section M of the PdM Radars solicitation states the offeror's technical volume of the proposal would be evaluated to determine the offeror's understanding of the requirement and the feasibility of approach. While the PdM Radars effort does not have a one-for-one correlation between section L requirements and section M evaluation criteria like the AFSOC solicitation, it does allow an evaluation of whether an offeror has a thorough grasp of the USG's requirements and the offeror can actually provide the solution offered.

2. Section L Requirements Specific to Resume Submissions

Section L of the UCF provides the detailed instructions for offerors to prepare and submit their proposals to an RFP. As discussed earlier in this chapter, section L of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP required offerors to substantiate their personnel approach, sub-factor 3 of the technical factor, by providing one resume, not to exceed three pages for each of the following eight key labor categories at the education/experience levels of IV and/or V: program management director, project task manager, management/program/acquisition analyst, engineer/scientist, life cycle logistics management analyst, technical analyst, software engineer, and budget analyst (ACC-APG, 2014).

The L-CATs and education/experience levels from section C of the RFP are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Breakdown of Labor Categories and Desired Education/Experience Levels. Source: ACC-APG (2014).

Labor Category Title	Education/Experience Level				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Program Management Director				X	X
Project/Task Manager			X	X	
Program Analyst			X	X	
Maneuver Center of Excellence Support/ Liaison			X	X	
Management/Program/Acquisition Analyst	X	X	X	X	X
Life Cycle Logistics Management Analyst	X	X	X	X	X
Engineer/Scientist	X	X	X	X	X
Admin Support Analyst	X	X	X	X	X
Graphic Artist/Illustrator/IT Analyst	X	X	X	X	X
Technical Analyst	X	X	X	X	X
Operations Analyst	X	X	X	X	
Technical Writer/Publisher		X	X	X	
Consultant			X	X	
Software Engineer		X	X	X	X
Configuration Manager	X	X			
Budget Analyst		X	X	X	X
Cost Analyst		X	X	X	
Logistics Specialist–Fielding and NET	X	X	X	X	
Quality Assurance Specialist			X	X	
Senior Designer			X		
Public Affairs Specialist–Staff Writer			X		

Table 8 Cont'd. Breakdown of Labor Categories and Desired Education/Experience Levels

Labor Category Title	Education/Experience Level				
SME System Analyst			X		
Webmaster			X		
Media Specialist/Historian			X		
Graphics Designer			X		
Media Relations Trainer				X	
Media Analyst			X		
TOTAL	9	13	24	19	9

As shown in Table 8, the PEO Soldier SETA effort included requirements for 27 different L-CATs with up to five education/experience levels, for a total of 74 position descriptions. Cells in gray in Table 8 correspond to the minimum labor categories and education/experience levels a prospective offeror was required to provide a resume for as part of the offeror's proposal, per section L instructions (ACC-APG, 2014).

The cost model for the PEO Soldier SETA effort was included as an attachment to the RFP. A review of the cost model reveals the specific quantity of FTEs sought by each office within PEO Soldier for the labor categories at the level IV education/experience level that required a resume submission for the base year only, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Quantity of FTEs Sought by Offices within PEO Soldier by Labor Category for the Level IV Education/Experience Level. Source: ACC-APG (2014).

Labor Category	PEO Soldier	PM SW	PM SWAR	PM SPIE	PM SSL	Total
Program Management Director	3	0	0	0	1	4
Project / Task Manager	2	0	5	0	0	7
Management / Program / Acquisition Analyst	18	2	8	4	15	47
Life Cycle Logistics Management Analyst	1	2	3	6	11	23
Engineer / Scientist	0	0	6	10	12	28
Technical Analyst	0	0	0	4	2.1	6.1
Software Engineer	0	0	0	6	0.5	6.5
Budget Analyst	0	0	0	1	3	4

As shown in Table 9, the management/program/acquisition analysts and engineer/scientist categories were the most sought after labor categories by the PEO Soldier organization that required a resume submission. The program management director and budget analyst categories were the least sought after labor categories. All offices within the PEO Soldier organization sought FTEs in the management/program/acquisition analyst and life cycle logistics management analyst labor categories (see Table 9) (ACC-APG, 2014).

The percentage of the population represented by a single resume submission for the number of FTEs in total to support PEO Soldier offices in the eight key labor categories is presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Percentage of the Population Represented by a Single Resume Submission by Labor Category

Labor Category	Total	% Represented by Submission of One Resume
Program Management Director	4	25.0
Project / Task Manager	7	14.3
Management / Program / Acquisition Analyst	47	2.1
Life Cycle Logistics Management Analyst	23	4.3
Engineer / Scientist	28	3.6
Technical Analyst	6.1	16.4
Software Engineer	6.5	15.4
Budget Analyst	4	25.0

Table 10 shows if an offeror provided a single resume for the program management director or budget analyst labor categories, 25.0% of the proposed workforce was represented by that single resume. Similarly, a single resume for the management/program/acquisition analyst, life cycle logistics management analyst, and engineer/scientist labor categories would represent only 2.1%, 4.3%, and 3.6% of the proposed workforce, respectively.

3. Contract Clauses to Consider with Regard to Compensation

As stated in earlier chapters of this project, the PEO Soldier SETA RFP from November 2014 used the LPTA source selection evaluation method to award a single CPFF contract worth up to $430M over a five-year period. Based on the inclusion of "lowest price" inherent to the LPTA source selection evaluation method, the USG should attempt to provide some level of protection that wages proposed to win a lowest price effort are reasonable, as this protects both the USG and the proposed workforce. The USG is protected from potentially awarding a contract with wages too low to hire and/or retain workers with the necessary skill sets. The proposed workforce is protected from

wages too low to pay for shelter, food, and other basic necessities to live a comfortable life while working on the contract.

The FAR has contract clauses that should be considered for inclusion in a SETA RFP with the objective of providing fair compensation to protect both the USG and the proposed contractor workforce. The first FAR clause is 52.222-42, the statement of equivalent rates for federal hires. The second FAR clause is 52.222-46, the evaluation of compensation for professional employees.

FAR clause 52.222-42 is the statement of equivalent rates for federal hires, and it "identifies the classes of service employees expected to be employed under the contract and states the wages and fringe benefits payable to each if they were employed by the contracting agency" (FAR, Sub-part 52.222-42) under the General Schedule (GS) pay scale. Per 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 4, sub-part B, 4.52, fringe benefits include vacation and holiday benefits, insurance, pension, and other benefits not required by law, prevailing in the locality of employment (Labor Standards for Federal Service Contracts, Sub-part 4.52). The FAR explicitly states the information included in the clause is for information only and is not a wage determination (FAR, Sub-part 52.222-42; however, the clause essentially identifies an unofficial salary "floor" for the various employee classes sought in a service contract.

FAR clause 52.222-46 is the evaluation of compensation for professional employees, and requires offerors to submit a total compensation plan, including both proposed salary and fringe benefits, for professional employees working on the contract. The clause clearly states the USG recognizes that re-competition of service contracts may result in lowering the compensation paid to employees, ultimately becoming a detriment in "obtaining the quality of professionals needed for adequate contract performance" (FAR, Sub-part 52.222-46, para. (a)). Offerors are warned "compensation that is unrealistically low or not in reasonable relationship to the various job categories, since it may impair the contractor's ability to attract and retain competent professional service employees" (FAR, Sub-part 52.222-46, para. (c)) is a concern. The clause goes on to state failure to comply with the clause may result in a justifiable rejection of the offeror's proposal (FAR, Sub-part 52.222-46).

A review of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP from November 2014 reveals only FAR clause 52.222-46 is included in section L (ACC-APG, 2014). By comparison, a review of the other SETA RFPs researched for this project and discussed in Chapter II, reveals FAR clause 52.222-42 is included in section I and 52.222-46 is included in section L of the AFSOC SETA RFP (765th Specialized Contracting Flight, 2015). The AFSOC SETA RFP includes the data shown in Table 11 for FAR clause 52.222-42 in section I.

Table 11. Employee Class, Monetary Wage, and Fringe Benefit Data from AFSOC SETA RFP. Source: 765th Specialized Contracting Flight (2015).

Employee Class		**Monetary Wage ($)**	**Fringe Benefit ($)**
GS-0326-04	Office Automation Clerk	13.59	4.46
GS-0525-05	Accounting Technician	15.21	4.99
GS-0326-05	Office Automation Clerk	15.21	4.99
GS-0318-05	Secretary (Stenography/OA)	15.21	4.99
GS-0318-07	Secretary (OA)	18.84	6.18
GS-0335-05	Computer Assistant	15.21	4.99
GS-0335-06	Computer Assistant	16.95	5.56
GS-0335-07	Computer Assistant	18.84	6.18
GS-0332-04	Computer Operator	13.59	4.46
GS-0895-09	Industrial Engineering Technician	23.04	7.56
GS-0810-09	Civil Engineering Developmental (Programming)	23.04	7.56
GS-0810-11	Civil Engineering–Programming	27.88	9.14
GS-0810-12	Civil Engineering–Design	33.41	10.96
GS-2210-09	Info Tech Spec (Network Systems/Customer Support)	23.04	7.56
GS-2210-11	Info Tech Spec (Network Services)	27.88	9.14
GS-2210-12	Info Tech Spec (Sys Analysis/Policy & Programming)	33.41	10.96
GS-1670-11	Equipment Specialist (Electrical/Electronic)	27.88	9.14
GS-0850-11	Electrical Engineering (Design)	27.88	9.14
GS-0850-12	Electrical Engineering (Design)	33.41	10.96

The equivalent employee classes, monetary wages, and fringe benefits for the SETA workforce sought by AFSOC can be seen clearly in Table 11. As mentioned in Chapter II, the AFSOC SETA effort also used the LPTA source selection evaluation method to award multiple FFP contracts.

The PdM Radars SETA RFP by comparison, is similar to the PEO Soldier SETA RFP in that only contract clause 52.222-46 is included in section L (ACC-APG, n.d.). As mentioned in Chapter II, the PdM Radars SETA effort used the tradeoff evaluation method to award a single CPFF contract. The significance of the compensation clauses included in the three SETA RFPs researched for this project will be discussed in Chapter IV.

4. Labor Category Descriptions

As mentioned in Chapter I, support for the PEO Soldier mission requires a wide assortment of specialties and skill sets based on the variety of programs in the PEO Soldier portfolio. The November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation included 27 separate L-CATs spread across five education/experience levels. The categories ranged from administrative support personnel, responsible for the management of recurring "day-to-day" administrative support to the PEO/program offices, to configuration managers responsible for managing technical documents and drawings. The L-CATs were then sub-divided into up to five different experience/education levels (ACC-APG, 2014).

While the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation included 27 unique L-CATs, as shown in Table 8, the authors of this project limit discussion to the engineer/scientist L-CAT to narrow the scope of this research effort. Table 12 is an excerpt from the November 2014 PEO Soldier solicitation for the engineer/scientist L-CAT description.

Table 12. PEO Soldier SETA Engineering Labor Category Description for Education/Experience Level V. Source: ACC-APG (2014).

Labor Category	**Description**	**Education/ Experience**
Engineer/Scientist	Provides *the highest level of technical expertise* or specialty engineering for the entire engineering life-cycle in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. Performs top level design, development, fabrication, testing, installation, troubleshooting. Directs and manages large-scale, complex programs. Sets and maintains overall direction for a program; to control overall scope, budget, and schedule for complex, multi-project programs; and communicates with managing Directors and client executive management to ensure that critical program related issues are addressed. Coordinates efforts with other functions.	Level V

The second column in Table 12 includes the engineer/scientist position description from the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation for education/experience level V. Appendix C of this project includes the engineer/scientist position descriptions from the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation for levels II through V. Note for the engineer/scientist L-CAT, level V, which is the highest level with regard to education/experience, the description states the position provides "the highest level of technical expertise" (ACC-APG, 2014, p. 80). The engineer/scientist L-CAT, level IV description is almost identical to the level V description with the exception the level IV position requires "senior-level technical expertise" (ACC-APG, 2014, p. 80). These specific phrases in the level IV and V descriptions are italicized/underlined in Appendix C to show the minor differences in the two position descriptions.

For all four levels of education/experience shown in Appendix C, the description for an engineer/scientist states the position requires technical expertise or specialty engineering in one or more of 10 engineering disciplines ranging from an optical engineer to an aeronautical engineer. The position descriptions for the engineer/scientist sought through the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA effort are general, even though the engineering needs for a combat boot are very different than those of a more technically intensive item such as a laser range finder.

The PdM Radars SETA solicitation, by comparison, includes engineering labor category descriptions with a more narrow focus, as shown in Table 13 and Appendix D:

Table 13. Test Engineer Labor Category Description from the PdM Radars SETA Solicitation. Source: ACC-APG (n.d.).

Labor Category	**Description**	**Skill Level / Education Level**
Test Engineer	The Test Engineer's primary responsibility is to oversee all test conducted on the Radar Systems at [Yuma Proving Ground] YPG and other remote locations as required by the Product Manager. During Live Fire Tests (LFTs) the test engineer will closely monitor and report system stability (hardware and software), emplacement/march order delays caused by operator errors. Test Engineer will analyze and report back to the Program Manager live fire test results which include the calculated Circular Error of Probability (CEP), Probability of Location (P/L), weapon classification statistics, number of false locations (FL's) and targets of opportunity (TOO's). The Test engineer also assists in conducting system inventory as part of the DD-250 process. Test engineer will work with the YPG Test Director to develop and tailor the shot matrix for each individual system based on range conflicts at YPG and the time allotted to have the system certified. Test engineer coordinates with the system Fielding Chief and YPG Transportation in order to get the system shipped to the next fielding location. Test engineer also coordinates the receipt of a new system with the customer. The Test engineer also supports additional exercises and systems as required by the Product Manager such as C-RAM Live Fire Tests Limited User Tests and other events.	Senior / Bachelor's Degree

While the PdM Radars SETA solicitation is specific to an organization with a singular focus on radar equipment, the unique position description for one of the types of engineers sought through the effort as shown in Table 13 highlights the specific engineering skill set needed to meet the USG's requirements.

B. SECONDARY RESEARCH: RISK MITIGATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER 2014 PEO SOLDIER SETA SOLICITATION

1. Risk Mitigation Considerations for Sections L and M for the Technical Factor and Sub-Factors

Regardless of whether a source selection uses a subjective tradeoff evaluation method or an LPTA evaluation method, the USG's solicitation must include a clear linkage between the proposal content requirements in section L and the evaluation criteria in section M. Defining how the USG will evaluate an offeror's required proposal content enables prospective offerors and the USG's source selection team to understand what is important to the USG. Offerors will have the opportunity to offer their best solution to the USG, and the USG will have clear discriminators to determine the proposal(s) that meet the USG's requirements.

Determining the "technical acceptability" of a proposal is of the utmost importance in a source selection using the LPTA evaluation method. If the USG does not clearly define what is "technically acceptable," significant risk will be inherent to the effort, as potential offerors and the USG's source selection evaluation board will not have the criteria to determine what does or does not meet the USG's requirement.

2. Risk Mitigation Considerations for Section L Requirements Specific to Resume Submissions

Assessing a prospective offeror's ability to meet the totality of the effort's technical requirements was impacted by the limited number of resumes required by the instructions included in section L of the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation. The researchers for this project did not have access to draft versions of the RFP, so it is unknown if the USG contemplated requiring offerors to provide a different quantity of resumes than the minimum required quantity of eight as the RFP was developed. Based on the size of the

SETA workforce sought, section L instructions could have required offerors to submit any quantity of resumes from 1 (one) to 504. Basing a decision to contract a workforce of more than 500 individuals based upon one resume would introduce a significant amount of risk as that would represent only 0.2% of the total desired number of FTEs. On the other hand, expecting a source selection evaluation board to evaluate hundreds of resumes per offeror is impractical, therefore it is understandable why the USG selected a quantity of resumes in between the full range of 1 to 504 employees. Determining the complete technical capability of a prospective offeror on a narrow representation of only eight resumes added significant risk to the effort. Chapter IV will include narrative on the specific risk introduced into the effort based on the calculated population of the proposed workforce represented by the eight resumes required by section L.

3. Risk Mitigation Considerations for Contract Clauses to Consider with Regard to Compensation

As stated in Chapter II, the FAR is the main regulation used by all federal executive agencies to acquire supplies and services. Part 52 of the FAR is dedicated to providing the regulations for the hundreds of provisions and clauses that can be included in solicitations to address specific aspects of the contract between parties, detailing the agreement between the parties entering a contract, to ensure each party understands what is expected of the other (Business Dictionary, n.d.). Inclusion of the appropriate contract clauses from FAR part 52 in a solicitation reduces risk for both the USG and the contractor as a clear understanding of contract terms supports effective contract execution and management.

FAR sub-part 52.301 is a matrix of all FAR provisions and contract clauses applicable to each principal contract type and/or purpose (supply, research & development, service). The applicability of the contract clauses pertaining to compensation, discussed earlier in Chapter III, per the FAR sub-part 52.301 matrix, is summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Applicability of Compensation Contract Clauses to Various Contract Types and Purposes. Adapted from FAR, Sub-part 52.301 (2012).

Clause	IBR	UCF	FP SUP	CR SUP	FP R&D	CR R&D	FP SVC	CR SVC	T&M LH	COM SVC
52.222-42	No	I					A	A	A	A
52.222-46	Yes	L					A	A		

IBR = Is Incorporation by Reference Authorized?
UCF = Uniform Contract Format Section, when Applicable
FP SUP = Fixed Price Supply
CR SUP = Cost Reimbursement Supply
FP R&D = Fixed Price Research & Development
CR R&D = Cost Reimbursement Research & Development
FP SVC = Fixed Price Service
CR SVC = Cost Reimbursement Service
T&M LH = Time & Materials/Labor Hours
COM SVC = Communication Services
A = Required when applicable

As indicated in Table 14, both clause 52.222-42 and 52.222-46 are applicable to fixed price and cost reimbursable service contracts. Clause 52.222-42 is also applicable to time & materials/labor hours and commercial service contracts. Clause 52.222-42 should be included in section I of the UCF, when applicable. Clause 52.222-46 should be included in section L of the UCF, when applicable. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the PEO Soldier SETA RFP seeking technical services under a CPFF contract only included clause 52.222-46 in the solicitation, adding risk to the effort. Chapter IV will discuss this risk through the lens of the explicit and implied applicability of clause 52.222-42 as it relates to the PEO Soldier mission.

4. Risk Mitigation Considerations for Labor Category Descriptions

As mentioned previously in this project, PEO Soldier currently manages over 100 programs and 240 products in four PM organizations with a wide variety of skill sets needed for the SETA positions providing technical support to the PEO Soldier equipment portfolio. For example, an electrical engineer needed on a laser range finder program in PM SSL would not be able to satisfy the requirements for an engineer required to work

textiles and materials for a combat boot acquired by PM SPIE. By including generic position descriptions for the engineer/scientist L-CATs in the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation, the USG increased risk to the effort by requiring offerors to respond to vague and ambiguous requirements.

Additionally, as discussed previously, the resumes included as part of an offeror's proposal were used to determine the technical acceptability of submitted offers. Regardless of the generic L-CAT descriptions included in the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA effort, the solicitation does not specify how the resumes would be evaluated to assist in that determination. The authors of this research are familiar with a resume scoring matrix (RSM), routinely used by PEO Soldier, to support hiring actions for USG positions within the organization. The RSM objectively gauges the qualifications of prospective employees using knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) related to the performance of duties. The RSM for a systems engineer position within PEO Soldier's organization is included as Appendix B of this project.

The RSM in Appendix B identifies three specific KSAs, two education levels, and three training certification levels used to evaluate the skill sets and technical expertise of potential USG employee candidates. Resumes received in response to a systems engineer job posting would be graded against the KSA, education, and training metrics defined in the RSM. Essentially, the RSM is used to determine whether the resume provides convincing evidence the candidate possesses the necessary skills and has the required experiences and education to effectively fill the role. The use of the RSM or an RSM-like tool to reduce risk during the evaluation of resumes submitted with the proposal for a SETA effort will be discussed in Chapter IV.

C. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the data and analysis used to answer both the primary and secondary research questions of this project. The two primary research questions focus on the impacts to the source selection evaluation criteria and the elements of the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation that added risk to the decision to use an LPTA source selection evaluation method to award the contract. To address the primary

research questions, the researchers presented data and analysis on the following from the PEO Soldier SETA RFP: the evaluation criteria, the number of resumes required for submission as part of an offeror's proposal, the clauses pertaining to compensation included in the solicitation, and the labor categories used to scope the required performance for the effort. The researchers also used the data and analysis for the primary research questions and researched documents such as the FAR to address the secondary research questions.

The findings from the analysis, as well comparison of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP to other SETA RFPs, will be presented in Chapter IV to answer this project's primary and secondary research questions.

IV. FINDINGS/RESULTS

Chapter III presented the data and analysis needed to answer the primary and secondary research questions. This chapter discusses the data and analysis to draw conclusions and answer the research questions. Other findings discovered during the research process will also be discussed.

A. PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Risk Impact of Sections L and M for the Technical Factor and Sub-Factors

Significant risk was added to the PEO Soldier SETA effort due to the lack of traceability between the section L and M requirements included in the November 2014 solicitation. Under the technical factor and three sub-factors discussed in chapter III of this project, offerors were required to provide 17 data items with the proposal submission per the section L requirements, however section M contained no specific evaluation criteria for any of the 17 data items. For example, under the management approach sub-factor to the technical factor, offerors were required to describe their contractor operations approach to providing required support staff for operations in multiple locations simultaneously (ACC-APG, 2014). Under this scenario, it would be expected to have site-based management leading back to the company program manager. Since the USG did not provide any details on how this information would be evaluated, it is not clear if it would have been acceptable for an offeror to propose FTEs working at an offsite location without resident management oversight. Instead, the offeror's contractor operations approach and the other 16 data items were rolled into a single rating of either acceptable or unacceptable.

As discussed in Chapter III, the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation identified three sub-factors under the technical factor: management approach, corporate experience, and personnel approach. Considering the administrative management approach was likely for the effort and that an offeror needed to provide evidence of servicing a contract with no fewer than 250 FTEs within the last five years to

demonstrate corporate experience, the only sub-factor that truly determined whether an offeror proposed a workforce with the technical knowledge and skill sets to meet the needs of the PEO Soldier mission was the personnel approach sub-factor. As will be discussed in the next section of this project, the USG's proposal content requirements for resumes carried risk, independent of the adequacy or inadequacy of the USG clearly linking sections L and M in the solicitation.

2. Risk Impact of Section L Requirements Specific to Resume Submissions

The USG's instructions included in section L with regard to the number of resumes to submit as part of the offeror's proposal in response to the PEO Soldier SETA RFP increased the risk to the effort. Assuming prospective offerors provided the minimum number of resumes required, a proposal with only eight resumes would have been compliant with the instructions in section L. Considering the solicitation was for 504 FTEs, reviewing eight resumes constitutes basing an award decision potentially worth more than $430M on an evaluation of only 1.6% of the requirement. Determining the complete technical capability of a prospective offeror on such a narrow representation of the prospective employee population added significant risk to the effort.

As mentioned in Chapter I of this project, products within the PEO Soldier portfolio span all five phases of the DAS. Specific acquisition needs vary widely between the different phases. For example, the acquisition documents needed to support a materiel development decision are far less in quantity and less detailed than the documentation requirements for a milestone C decision (DAU, n.d.-b.). In Table 9, Chapter III is highlighted the quantity of FTEs sought for eight key labor categories in all offices within the PEO Soldier organization. Determining the entire proposed workforce of 47 management/program/acquisition analysts had the necessary skills to cover the acquisition needs of programs/products across all phases of the DAS by evaluating only one resume added risk to the effort. Also mentioned in Chapter I is the observation the PEO Soldier portfolio is diverse across technologies as shown in managed products ranging from combat boots by PM SPIE to handheld laser targeting devices by PM SSL. While a combat boot may require an engineer/scientist familiar with material science to

determine whether a particular material is appropriate for use, a laser targeting device requires an engineer/scientist with an entirely different knowledge set. In Table 10, Chapter III is a summary of the percentage of the proposed workforce population represented by a single resume submission for the eight key labor categories. Considering only four FTEs were sought in the program management director or budget analyst labor categories, one resume represented 25.0% of the proposed workforce, a reasonable sample size considering both labor categories include skill sets that can be leveraged across the PEO portfolio, and do not require knowledge or experience with specific technologies. On the other hand, for the engineer/scientist labor category, one resume represented only 3.6% of the proposed workforce for that labor category. Determining that the entire proposed workforce of 28 engineer/scientists had the skills and background to cover the technical needs of PEO Soldier's diverse product portfolio by evaluating only one resume added risk to the effort.

3. Risk Impact of Contract Clauses to Consider with Regard to Compensation

Excluding clause 52.222-42 and including only clause 52.222-46 in the PEO Soldier SETA RFP increased the risk to the effort. As shown in Table 14 of Chapter III, both 52.222-42 and 52.222-46 are applicable for inclusion in solicitations for services, regardless of the contract type. Including only clause 52.222-46 ensures an offeror's proposal contains a total compensation plan, including both proposed salary and fringe benefits. If an offeror's proposed total compensation plan is unrealistic or not reasonable to attract and retain the level of professional service employees needed to meet contractual requirements, the offeror's proposal can be removed from consideration for an award (FAR, Sub-part 52.222-46). Considering that clause 52.222-46 is included only in section L of the RFP, the level of protection the clause offers for fair compensation is reduced once proposals are received and evaluated. Including clause 52.222-42 in section I offers some level of protection for fair compensation before and after a contract award. Including both clauses in an RFP addresses fair compensation concerns throughout a

contract effort and explains why FAR sub-part 52.301 identifies both clauses as being applicable for inclusion in solicitations for services, regardless of the contract type.

The applicability of clause 52.222-42 to the PEO Soldier SETA RFP is debatable based on PEO Soldier being an acquisition organization. Per the description of 52.222-42 in Chapter II, the clause "identifies the classes of service employees expected to be employed under the contract and states the wages and fringe benefits payable to each if they were employed by the contracting agency" (FAR, Sub-part 52.222-42) under the GS pay scale. Since PEO Soldier is an acquisition organization, the civilian workforce operates under the DOD's Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration (AcqDemo) project, a Congressionally-mandated project designed to attract, motivate, and retain a high-quality acquisition, technology, and logistics (AT&L) workforce (AcqDemo, n.d.-a). AcqDemo uses broadbanding to group AT&L occupations with similar characteristics into three career paths, each with four broadband levels. Compensation for the AT&L workforce relates directly to the defined broadbands (AcqDemo, n.d.-b.). Since the compensation for a DOD acquisition organization's civilian employee workforce is determined through the AcqDemo broadband categories and not the GS pay scale, clause 52.222-42 may not be applicable directly to the PEO Soldier SETA RFP since the GS pay scale does not apply to PEO Soldier, or any AT&L workforce. The authors of this project will propose risk mitigation in our Secondary Research Findings to address concerns with the applicability of clause 52.222-42 to a SETA RFP, regardless of whether an organization operates under the GS pay scale or AcqDemo.

The other SETA RFPs discussed previously in this project were reviewed to determine what clauses pertaining to compensation were included in other SETA efforts. The AFSOC SETA RFP included 52.222-42 in section I and 52.222-46 in section L, reducing the risk to using an LPTA source selection evaluation method. The PdM Radars SETA RFP included only 52.222-46 in section L, adding risk to that effort, however considering the PdM Radars SETA effort used a tradeoff source selection evaluation approach, the potential for an offeror to propose compensation below a "floor" was reduced because for the PdM Radars SETA RFP, the technical factor significantly outweighed the cost factor, thereby reducing the pressure for an offeror to provide a

proposed cost so low that attracting and retaining professional service employees to meet the contract requirements was not feasible.

4. Risk Impact of Labor Category Descriptions

The risk to the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA effort was increased through the provision of generic position descriptions in the solicitation as demonstrated through the discussion of the engineer/scientist L-CATs in Chapter III of this project. While the PEO Soldier industry day brief discussed in Chapter II included descriptions of the different systems acquired by the PM offices within the PEO Soldier organization, the solicitation was released without defining the specific engineering labor category needs for each PM office. Additionally, by identifying a broad range of engineering disciplines in the engineering/scientist L-CAT descriptions, to include an aeronautical engineer, a prospective offeror could have proposed an entire engineering workforce of aeronautical engineers that would have been compliant to the requirements of the solicitation even though PEO Soldier does not have a program requiring aeronautical engineering expertise.

Additional risk to the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA effort was incurred due to the solicitation not providing clear differences between the different L-CAT descriptions for the experience/education levels sought in the effort. For example, the descriptions for the engineer/scientist L-CATs for experience/educations levels V and IV were distinguished by the phrases “the highest level of technical expertise” and “senior-level technical expertise,” respectively, as captured in Appendix C. Definitions from Merriam Webster’s Ninth Edition do not provide much, if any difference, between the two phrases. “Senior” is referred to as [a person with] a higher ranking” (Merriam-Webster, 1986) where “highest” [candidate] has the “greater degree/amount of [experience].” (Merriam-Webster, 1986) Both definitions are subjective with regard to comparison and could be easily interchanged by the source selection evaluation team. This subjectivity due to the lack of granularity of the L-CAT descriptions increases the difficulty of evaluating an offeror’s proposed workforce.

By comparison, the PdM Radars SETA solicitation mitigated risk by including very specific L-CAT descriptions of the various types of engineers defined in the solicitation including a test engineer, a radar engineer, and a systems engineer. As shown in Table 13, the test engineer L-CAT description in the PdM Radars SETA solicitation provides a detailed narrative on the anticipated tasks a test engineer will be expected to perform under the contract. This specificity and clear definition of requirements reduces the risk of an offeror proposing a workforce that is not aligned with the USG's needs.

B. SECONDARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Risk Mitigation for Sections L and M for the Technical Factor and Sub-Factors

The significant risk inherent to the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation could have been mitigated had the solicitation included a more direct correlation between sections L and M. As discussed in chapter III, while both the PEO Soldier and AFSOC SETA efforts used an LPTA source selection evaluation method, the AFSOC effort includes a one-to-one correlation between the 22 data items required to be included in an offeror's proposal per section L instructions and the evaluation of the information per section M, providing both offerors and the USG's source selection team with a clear understanding of what was technically acceptable. The PEO Soldier SETA solicitation required offerors to provide 17 data items in their proposal with no clear linkage to how the information would be used to evaluate the offer. The PEO Soldier SETA solicitation should have clearly defined how the 17 data points would be evaluated to determine the technical acceptability of the offeror's proposal.

While both the definitions of acceptable and unacceptable are similar between the PEO Soldier and AFSOC solicitations, there is a significant difference between how the information required to be included in the offeror's proposal would be evaluated. The evaluation details included in the AFSOC solicitation reduced risk to the AFSOC effort while the evaluation details included in the PEO Soldier solicitation increased risk to the PEO Soldier effort.

2. Risk Mitigation for Section L Requirements Specific to Resume Submissions

The USG could have taken steps to mitigate the risk of evaluating resumes to assess the technical capability of prospective offerors. Risk mitigation could have included requiring offerors to provide one resume for the education/experience levels III, IV, and V for the eight key labor categories. This mitigation strategy would have resulted in an offeror needing to provide a minimum of 22 resumes as part of the proposal, corresponding to an evaluation of almost 30% of the 74 combinations of labor categories and education/experience levels shown in Table 8 from Chapter III. Expanding the required pool of resumes would have provided the USG an opportunity to conduct a broader assessment of a potential offeror's ability to provide the required levels of service in the key labor categories.

To reduce risk further, the USG should have required offerors to submit resumes that demonstrated the wide skill sets of the proposed workforce needed to support the different acquisition and technology needs of the various PM offices within the PEO Soldier organization as captured in Table 9 in Chapter III of this project. For example, offerors could have been required to provide engineer/scientist resumes specific to the needs of PM SWAR, PM SPIE, and PM SSL to show the proposed workforce had the technical expertise for the various programs needing engineering support across the portfolio.

3. Risk Mitigation for Contract Clauses to Consider with Regard to Compensation

The USG should have included clause 52.222-42 in section I and 52.222-46 in section L of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP to reduce risk associated with compensation, especially considering the LPTA source selection method used to evaluate submitted proposals. As mentioned in the Primary Research Findings narrative earlier in this chapter, including both clauses in an RFP addresses concerns with compensation both before and after an award for SETA support. Including only clause 52.222-46 added risk to the PEO Soldier SETA RFP because no clause was included in the contract to inform compensation determinations after the contract was awarded. Without clause 52.222-42

in the contract, an offeror could have been selected for an award by proposing a total compensation package adhering to the provisions in clause 52.222-46, but then could have made a business decision to reduce monetary wages and/or fringe benefits below reasonable levels to retain and attract the professional service employees needed for the effort, after the contract was awarded. The authors of this project recognize clause 52.222-42 is for information only and does not set a wage determination, however, it could be a useful tool in maintaining cost realism during execution of a contract.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one could argue clause 52.222-42 is not applicable to any DOD SETA RFP for an AT&L organization, such as PEO Soldier, because the compensation for the AT&L workforce is determined by AcqDemo broadbands and not the GS pay scale. While AcqDemo does indeed use broadbands, it is possible to convert position/compensation level classifications between GS and AcqDemo, as shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Position/Compensation Level Conversions between General Schedule and AcqDemo. Source: AcqDemo (n.d.-b.).

Broadband Level	NH–Business and Technical Management Professional	NJ–Technical Management Support	NK–Administrative Support
I	GS 1–4	GS 1–4	GS 1–4
II	GS 5–11	GS 5–8	GS 5–7
III	GS 12–13	GS 9–11	GS 8–10
IV	GS 14–15	GS 12–13	Not applicable

The USG could have used the conversion data in Table 15 to determine the equivalency between the AcqDemo and GS classifications for the labor categories and education/experience levels summarized in Table 8 from Chapter III to complete the "employee class" information in clause 52.222-42. Alternatively, per FAR sub-part 22.2016, the USG could have asked the local Civilian Personnel Office for assistance in determining the federal classification titles and grade levels. "Monetary wage" data to

include in clause 52.222-42 can be determined by using GS pay scales issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or with assistance from the local Civilian Personnel Office (FAR, Sub-part 22.2016). Finally, "fringe benefits" data for clause 52.222-42 can vary and guidance for determining fringe benefit data has been issued by the USG Publishing Office (Labor Standards for Federal Service Contracts, Sub-part 4.52).

4. Risk Mitigation for Labor Category Descriptions

The USG should have included specific engineering/scientist descriptions to clearly define the requirements for the various offices within the PEO Soldier organization with engineering needs. While defining specific requirements for an electrical or mechanical engineer needed to support the development and production of a program with a laser range finder by PM SSL and a material scientist needed to support the evaluation of a combat boot by PM SPIE may increase the number of L-CAT descriptions included in a SETA solicitation, this specificity is necessary for an organization with a broad range of technical support needs, such as PEO Soldier.

In addition to increasing the number of resumes required to be provided by the offeror as recommended earlier in this chapter, the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation should have clearly articulated how the resumes submitted with each proposal would be used to evaluate an offeror's technical capability. Section L identifies the requirement to provide resumes as part of the offeror's personnel approach, sub-factor 3 of the technical factor. Section M of the solicitation only stipulates "proposals must provide convincing evidence that demonstrates the offeror has the appropriate… personnel approach in order to meet all the requirements of the solicitation" (ACC-APG, 2014, p. 211). Section M should have identified the criteria used to determine whether a submitted resume provided "convincing evidence" the individual tied to the resume was qualified to meet the requirements of the solicitation. The RSM or an RSM-like tool discussed previously in this research would be useful during the review of resumes included as part of an offeror's proposal to determine whether the proposed workforce has the technical skills, education, and expertise to meet the USG's requirements. The authors recognize use of

such a tool during a source selection would need to be identified in section M of the solicitation.

C. OTHER FINDINGS

1. No Allowable Overtime

The November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation did not permit for overtime as clause 52.222-2 included in section I states "the use of overtime is authorized under this contract if the overtime premium cost does not exceed $0.00" (ACC-APG, 2014, p. 128) and note f associated with the cost model instructions in section L of the RFP states the "use of uncompensated overtimes is not encouraged" (ACC-APG, 2014, p. 205). Not allowing overtime adds risk to the execution of the effort as a possible scenario that could unfold is as follows: the work associated with any vacant position may not be able to be distributed to other workers under the contract, if they are already working 40 hours per week to complete their original assigned workload and tasks. If the work cannot be distributed in part, or in whole, to other workers, the work cannot be completed, and the mission may suffer.

2. No Reference to DODI 5000.02 in the Solicitation

The November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation did not include a reference to detailed procedures defined in DODI 5000.02. As stated in previous chapters of this project, PEO Soldier is an acquisition organization that procures and fields equipment to our soldiers by using the DAS. The DODI 5000.02 is a document specific to the DAS and was published 7 January 2015, replacing interim guidance issued in November 2013. The DODI 5000.02 provides the detailed procedures guiding the operation of the DAS, supporting the overarching management principles and mandatory policies governing the DAS captured in the DODI 5000.01–The Defense Acquisition System, issued 12 May 2003 (DOD 2015). Not referencing the DODI 5000.02 adds risk to the execution of the effort as the SETA workforce sought through the PEO Soldier SETA RFP was intended to augment the military and civilian workforce of the organization. Without the reference to the DODI 5000.02 in the PWS for the effort, a possible scenario that could occur is the selected vendor could provide an employee meeting the labor category description and

education/experience levels defined in the RFP, but that does not have any acquisition experience as it pertains to DODI 5000.02, adversely impacting the PEO Soldier mission.

D. SUMMARY

This chapter presents the findings drawn from the data and analysis from Chapter III to address the primary and secondary research questions of this project. Two additional findings that added risk to the execution of the PEO Soldier SETA effort were also discussed.

This research found the section M evaluation criteria in the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA RFP was inadequate to effectively evaluate the technical acceptability of proposals received in response to the solicitation, adding significant risk to the effort as an LPTA source selection evaluation method was used to select the offeror for an award. This research also found the USG's requirement for offerors to include a single resume for only eight key labor categories with their proposal to evaluate a workforce of over 500 employees added significant risk to the effort. While one resume was representative for the program management director or budget analyst workforce considering the skill sets for these labor categories have wide application across the PEO Soldier organization, one resume is not representative of the engineer/scientist workforce based on the diverse engineering needs of the PM offices within the PEO Soldier organization. Another finding is the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation did not include FAR clause 52.222-42 in section I of the RFP. This oversight added risk as the clause provides the USG with a tool to gauge cost realism during execution of the contract. This research also found the labor categories and education/experience levels included in the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation added risk to the effort because they were not descriptive enough to truly determine whether the proposed workforce had the necessary skills to meet the performance requirements for the effort.

Additional risks found in the PEO Soldier SETA RFP include not allowing overtime compensation and not including a reference to DODI 5000.02, the publication providing DOD acquisition organizations such as PEO Soldier with the detailed procedures guiding the operation of the DAS.

Chapter V will draw conclusions from the findings from this chapter, summarize this research, and will propose areas for further research.

V. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUMMARY, AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research lead to several conclusions about the appropriate use of LPTA as a source selection evaluation method for a SETA RFP.

First, section M criteria must be consistent and traceable with the proposal content instructions provided to prospective offerors in section L. The importance of having clear evaluation criteria consistent and traceable with required proposal content is critical to an effort using an LPTA source selection evaluation method, as this information defines what is "technically acceptable." As demonstrated through the findings on the misalignment of sections L and M of the PEO Soldier SETA RFP, the USG did not clearly show the linkages between content required for proposal submission and how the information would be used to evaluate the proposal. Of greater significance is the finding the PEO Soldier SETA RFP does not clearly show how an offeror would demonstrate technically acceptable performance beyond providing a proposal adhering to proposal content required by section L.

Secondly, the proposal content required by section L of the RFP and the USG's source selection evaluation criteria in section M of the RFP must also be reasonable and well defined as it is this information that supports selection of a proposal best meeting the needs of the USG. As discussed through the findings on the number of resumes provided by an offeror per the section L instructions in the PEO Soldier SETA RFP, the USG was willing to allow offerors to demonstrate their proposed engineer/scientist workforce had the necessary skills, education and experience to meet the SETA support needs throughout the organization, based on submission of one resume representing only 3.6% of the desired SETA workforce for that labor category.

Additionally, this research highlights the necessity for the USG to clearly define the requirements for an effort. The USG's requirements form the basis of an offeror's proposal submitted in response to an RFP, regardless of whether the USG is seeking

services or a physical product. Clear and unambiguous requirements allow offerors to effectively and efficiently respond to the USG's needs, as the offeror can more accurately assess performance, cost, schedule, and risk when proposing a solution to the USG. If the USG's requirements are vague and ambiguous as demonstrated through the findings of the engineering/scientist labor categories included in the PEO Soldier SETA RFP, an offeror's proposed engineering workforce may not meet the needs of an organization with such a diverse portfolio.

Thirdly, a solicitation must be reviewed in its entirety to find risks within the documentation to assess the impacts of those risks on the execution of the effort. As shown through the findings of specific risks found within the PEO Soldier SETA RFP, not including the contract clause 52.222-42 in section I, not allowing overtime compensation, and not having a reference to the DODI 5000.02 in the solicitation could have a small impact on the effort on an individual basis, but the minor oversights and/or omissions have a tremendous impact on the effort when combined. Combing through a solicitation and identifying risks and their impact allows for mitigation of those risks to a manageable level before a solicitation is finalized and released to industry.

A final recommendation based on this research is federal agencies seeking SETA support, including PEO Soldier, should consider leveraging GSA's capabilities to fulfill their requirements for engineering and technical services. The services offered through the GSA's PSS, OASIS, and IT Schedule 70 align with the services sought by the PEO Soldier SETA effort. By obtaining services through the GSA, PEO Soldier could have simplified their SETA support acquisition, ultimately saving time and money, and avoiding the need to conduct a separate source selection for services readily available under a streamlined process.

B. SUMMARY

This research presented a review of the PEO Soldier SETA solicitation from November 2014 to reveal risks associated with using LPTA as the source selection evaluation method for an effort where technical expertise is the primary deliverable. The evaluation criteria for the PEO Soldier SETA contract was discussed and the risks

associated with the definition of "technically acceptable" included in the solicitation were identified. This research also identified how the risks with the definition of "technically acceptable" could have been mitigated for the PEO Soldier SETA RFP. Research conducted on other USG SETA solicitations and other DOD policy and guidance on source selection procedures and processes relevant to a SETA effort was used to assist in identifying proposed mitigation for the risks found within the PEO Soldier SETA RFP with the goal of reducing risk to future SETA solicitation efforts.

Ultimately, use of LPTA as a source selection evaluation method is appropriate for a SETA solicitation assuming the requirements for the effort are clearly defined, the proposal content requirements in section L support an effective evaluation of the offeror's proposal, and the source selection evaluation criteria in section M is well defined and consistent with section L.

C. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research conducted for this project supported answering the objectives presented in chapter I and uncovered areas for further research.

The narrative in chapter II reveals specific policy does not exist regarding the acquisition of SETA support. While FAR part 37 addresses the acquisition of services, the authors found one can tie SETA services to A&AS described in FAR sub-part 37.2, only by linking indirect references to SETA found in a variety of documents, including the DAG. The authors caution that the DAG is a guidebook presenting best practice recommendations and is not official policy. Considering that the DOD's use of SETA support will continue, as shown through the research of the PEO Soldier, PdM Radars, and AFSOC SETA RFPs, developing recommendations for specific policy for SETA services may streamline future acquisitions and reduce misinterpretation or misapplication of policy currently used to acquire SETA support.

Another area for further research is a comparison of the PEO Soldier portfolio with other PEO organizations within the Army, or similar organizations in the other services. As mentioned throughout this project, the PEO Soldier portfolio is diverse in the types of products and systems acquired for our soldiers. An analysis of other PEOs and

the methods used to obtain technical support for those PEOs should be examined to determine if PEO Soldier's unique mission adds an additional layer of complexity to the acquisition of SETA support. This research may reveal additional options for PEO Soldier to best acquire SETA support to augment the organization's military and civilian workforce dedicated to protecting and enhancing the capabilities of our soldiers.

APPENDIX A. SECTION L AND M CROSSWALK FOR THE TECHNICAL FACTOR AND ALL SUB-FACTORS FOR THE AFSOC SETA EFFORT

Section L proposal content requirements and corresponding section M evaluation criteria for the technical factor and all sub-factors for the AFSOC SETA effort. Adapted from 765th Specialized Contracting Flight (2015).

AFIC Solicitation

Section L, instructions to offerors	Section M **Acceptable** Proposal clearly meets the minimum requirements of the solicitation. **Unacceptable** Proposal does not clearly meet the minimum requirements of the solicitation.
2.5. Technical – Subfactor 1, Corporate Management Plan	**M0002 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND FACTORS** AFSOC
The Offeror shall submit a Corporate Management Plan covering the Prime and all Team Members. The Corporate Management Plan shall apply to all geographical locations. The Corporate Management Plan must demonstrate the team's capability and capacity to meet the requirements. The Corporate Management Plan shall include:	2.1.2. Measure of Merit: The Offeror must provide a Corporate Management Plan covering the Prime and all Team Members to cover all geographical locations. The Corporate Management Plan must demonstrate the team's capability and capacity to meet the requirements. This subfactor is met when the Offeror:
2.5.1. A description of internal corporate structures coupled with firm commitments with teaming members such as Teaming Arrangements and/or Letters of Intent or that describe a sound corporate and team structure that addresses reach back and management of multiple geographically dispersed task orders.	2.1.2.1. Demonstrates a sound corporate and/or team structure with sufficient depth and breadth to accomplish multiple geographically dispersed task orders The Offeror's approach describes all valid external corporate commitments between all parties, if applicable, that details business agreements such as Teaming arrangements and/or Letters of Intent. The corporate structure demonstrates an effective method to reach back to corporate Prime and Team Member knowledge
2.5.2. The Offeror's proposal shall also describe direct relationships between the senior leadership and management personnel assigned to this contract for efficient operations. The corporate structure must describe the area(s) of expertise and percentage of work to be performed by the prime and all teaming members for this requirement.	2.1.2.2. The Offeror demonstrates a corporate structure to ensure effective and efficient business operations of this contract with direct relationship between the senior leadership and management personnel assigned with the area(s) of expertise and percentage of work performed by the prime and all teaming members for this requirement. Offeror affirms the Prime contractor's responsibly for all aspects of the
2.5.3. A description of the Offeror's Team Structure Matrix, if applicable. The offeror shall complete and submit the "Team Structure Matrix" (Table L0004-1 below) that identifies the "Prime Contractor" and "Other Supporting Contractor(s)" (if applicable) for each PWS functional specialty. Identify in the last column of the matrix where in the Technical proposal the "Primary Contributors" meet the requirements identified in the PWS for each of the functional specialties.	2.1.2.3. Provides a complete Team Structure Matrix identifying the "Prime Contractor" and "Other Supporting Contractor(s)" (if applicable) as well as the "Primary Contributors" meeting the requirements for each PWS functional specialty.
2.5.4. The proposal shall describe the rationale for selection of the "Other Supporting Contractor(s)," to respond to the PWS functional specialties and the plan or process for ensuring the optimal "team" members are proposed at the TO level. ("Team" - is considered prime and selected teaming subcontractor(s), if any)	2.1.2.4. Provides a sound rationale for its Team composition to respond to the following PWS functional specialties and ensuring the optimal "team" members are proposed at the TO level. ("Team" - is considered prime or lead contractor and selected subcontractor(s), if any) 2.1.2.4.1. Management and Professional Services (PWS para 1.3.1) (a) Operations and Training Management and Professional Support Services (PWS para 1.3.1.1) (b) Acquisition and Logistics Management and Professional Support Services (PWS para 1.3.1.2) (c) Intelligence Management and Professional Support Services (PWS para 1.3.1.3) 2.1.2.4.2. Studies, Analyses, and Evaluations (PWS para 1.3.2) (a) Special Tactics (ST Operations Analysis and Planning Support (PWS para 1.3.2.1) (b) HQ USAF Operational Program Support (PWS para 1.3.2.2) (c) CV-22 Program Management and Technical Support (PWS para1.3.2.3) (d) AFSOC Tactics Program Management Support (PWS para 1.3.2.4)
2.5.5. The plan shall identify organization and qualifications of key personnel positions that will be responsible for the task orders. The plan shall identify the roles and responsibilities of program management and basic contract management positions as needed including project manager(s) and/or any other management personnel involved in day-to-day contract operations that are responsible for performance of task orders and ensuring compliance with FAR Clause 52.219-14, Limitations on Subcontracting.	2.1.2.5. Identifies the organization and qualifications of key personnel positions, roles and responsibilities of program management positions, project manager(s) and/or other management personnel involved in day-to-day contract operations responsible for performance of task orders. The plan demonstrates how the Offeror will ensure compliance with FAR Clause 52.219-14, Limitations on Subcontracting.

2.6. Technical – Subfactor 2, Workforce Management Approach	2.2. Technical – Subfactor 2 – Workforce Management
The Offeror shall submit a Workforce Management Approach covering the Prime and all Team Members workforce. The Workforce Management Approach shall apply to all geographical locations. The Workforce Management Approach must demonstrate the proposed workforce capability and capacity to meet the requirements. The workforce management approach shall	This requirement is met when the Offeror's proposal demonstrates a sound and comprehensive approach to provide, manage, and retain the appropriate qualified workforce to successfully and effectively achieve the requirements of the PWS on schedule and within budget in accordance with all requirements specified of the solicitation. This subfactor is met when:
(a) A description of the offeror's approach for recruiting, retention, qualifications validation and currency, and training. The Offeror's methodology must describe how the Offeror's approach will ensure sufficient workforce with the depth and breadth of technical and Special Operations Forces (SOF) experience. In addition, the approach shall address process to accomplish a smooth transition with any incumbent contractors during the phase-in period and compliance IAW Clause H-0031 Nondisplacement of Qualified Workers and PWS Paragraph titled "Transition".	(a) The Offeror's approach demonstrates a sound and comprehensive planning, resourcing, processes to recruit, retain, train and manage qualified personnel at the proposed labor rates to accomplish the mission and types of tasks expected to be performed per the PWS. Approach demonstrates an organization with sufficient workforce with the depth and breadth of technical and Special Operations Forces experience to accomplish the complexity of services specified in the PWS. The approach describes the process to provide a qualified, stable workforce with minimal turnover of personnel to accomplish a smooth transition to comply with the solicitation.
(b) The Offeror's approach shall include the process to validate qualifications, credentials of potential candidates to ensure they possess appropriate levels of certification currency, education, experience, and expertise; and ensuring individuals receive proper training to perform their work. The Offeror's methodology must describe how the Offeror's approach will ensure task order personnel qualifications and licensure/certifications/credentials are maintained without additional cost or intervention from the Government, including currency of and renewal before expiration during the term of the contract performance to avoid potential impacts to schedule or performance.	(b) The Offeror's approach includes the process the Offeror uses to validate credentials of potential candidates to ensure they possess appropriate levels of education, experience, and expertise; and ensuring individuals receive proper training to perform their work. The Offeror's methodology describes how the Offeror's approach will ensure task order personnel qualifications and licensure/certifications/credentials are maintained without additional cost or intervention from the Government, including currency of and renewal before expiration during the term of the contract performance to avoid potential impacts to schedule or performance.
(c) The approach shall describe the Offeror's process to be used to ensure qualified personnel are available (including to satisfy any required security clearances for personnel) upon the negotiated start date of task orders avoiding potential impacts to schedule or performance. In addition, a description of how the prime will maintain qualified stable workforce after a task order has been awarded to ensure customer requirements are met, services are provided on time, and within budget.	(c) The Offeror's approach demonstrates how the Offeror will ensure qualified personnel are available (including personnel with required security clearances) upon start of Task Order and maintain a qualified, stable workforce avoiding potential impacts to schedule or performance.
(d) The Offeror's approach shall maximize continuity and minimize disruption and describe how it will mitigate risks associated with changes in key and other management personnel should a change in personnel occur. The approach shall also include the process to ensure continuation of services during personnel absences due to sickness, leave, and voluntary or involuntary termination from employment such that impact to the Government is minimal and position vacancies do not exceed 30 calendar days.	(d) The Offeror's approach demonstrates how the Offeror will maximize continuity and minimizes disruption to schedule or performance and how it will mitigate risks associated with changes in personnel and personnel with security clearances should a change in personnel occur. The approach includes the process to ensure continuation of services during personnel absences due to sickness, leave, and voluntary or involuntary termination from employment such that impact to the Government is minimal and position vacancies do not exceed 30 calendar days.
(e) The Offeror's appoach shall describe the Company policy on management of employee vacancies for Select Reserve duty commitments; e.g., employee reserve duty is considered time off without pay, payment of full salary vs reduced salary while employee is on annual 2-week or longer Select Reserve duty requirement, etc. In addition, the Offeror's approach in providing substitute personnel if customer requires service during the vacancy period.	(e) The Offeror's approach includes the Company policy on management of employee vacancies for Select Reserve duty commitments; e.g., employee reserve duty is considered time off without pay, payment of full salary vs reduced salary while employee is on annual 2-week or longer Select Reserve duty requirement, etc. In addition, the Offeror's approach demonstrates how the Offeror will substitute personnel if required during the vacancy period.
(f) The approach shall describe the process to provide a qualified, stable workforce with minimal turnover of personnel including a total compensation plan in accordance with FAR provision 52.222-46 (Evaluation of Compensation for	(f) The Offeror's approach describes the process to provide a qualified, stable workforce with minimal turnover of personnel in accordance with FAR provision 52.222-46 (Evaluation of Compensation for Professional Employees).

2.7. Technical – Subfactor 3, Quality Control Plan The offeror shall provide a QC plan that describes a quality control approach. The QC plan shall include:	**2.3. Technical – Subfactor 3 – Quality Control Plan** This requirement is met when the Offeror's proposal demonstrates a Quality Control (QC) plan with the sufficient depth and breadth that describes an adequate quality control approach. This subfactor is met when:
(a) The Offeror's QC plan shall ensure services and deliverables are technically, scientifically, and professionally sound as well as timely and error free. The plan shall include the Prime as well as Team Members. The plan must also describe a quality approach that ensures the quality of services and deliverables do not degrade over time. Note: If the Offeror is successful in obtaining a SETA V IDIQ contract, the Offeror's QC plan will be incorporated into the basic contract.	(a) The Offeror's QC plan adequately demonstrates a sound, comprehensive, effective, and efficient approach to managing QC for the entire Team. In addition, Offeror's quality approach demonstrates at a minimum how the quality of services and deliverables will not degrade over time. The plan shall include examples of successful QC programs.
(b) The Offeror's QC plan shall describe aprocess for monitoring team performance, to include quality of work and resolution of team conflict at the TO level. The plan shall include a process for internal and external communication between the prime, team members and the Government during task execution.	(b) The Offeror's QC plan demonstrates how the Offeror will monitor team performance, to include quality of work and resolution of team conflict at the TO level. The plan describes adequate process for internal and external communication between the prime, team members and the Government during task execution.
(c) The Offeror's QC plan shall describe a process to respond to time-constrained requirements and unexpected surges in activity (time critical within 48 hours and time sensitive within 2-5 days).	(c) The Offeror's QC plan adequately describes the process for monitoring team performance, to include quality of work and resolution of team conflict at the TO level. The plan shall include a process for internal and external communication between the prime, team members and the Government during task execution.
(d) The Offeror's QC plan must describe an efficient and effective process to accurately managing security clearances and process for completing the required Government security clearances before personnel performance start date.	(d) The Offeror's QC plan describes acceptable process to respond to time-constrained requirements and unexpected surges in activity (time critical within 48 hours and time sensitive within 2-5 days). (e) The Offeror's QC plan demonstrates a sound, comprehensive, effective, and efficient process to accurately manage security clearances prior to and during task order performance.
(e) The Offeror's QC plan must describe process to avoid, neutralize or mitigate Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCI).	(f) The Offeror's QC plan adequately describes process to avoid, neutralize or mitigate Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCI).

2.8. Technical – Subfactor 4, Security Administration Plan	2.4. Technical – Subfactor 4 – Security Administration
The offeror shall provide a Security Administration Plan that describes security administration approach. The plan shall include:	2.4.1. This requirement is met when the Offeror's proposal demonstrates an organization with the sufficient depth and breadth to manage and accomplish the security administration. The Offeror security administration plan formulation of adequate regulatory procedures in the safeguarding of classified defense and other protected information IA'W PWS that describes security administration approach. This subfactor is met when:
(a) The Offeror shall provide the Offeror's current level of Facility Clearance and Contractor & Government Entity (CAGE) code to ensure adequate regulatory procedures in the safeguarding of classified defense and other protected information.	(a) The Offeror provides the Offeror's verifiable current level of Facility Clearance and Contractor & Government Entity (CAGE) code and process of adequate regulatory procedures in the safeguarding of classified defense and other protected information.
(b) The Offeror shall provide a list of key personnel by the "Primary Contributor(s)" with current Secret, Top Secret (TS), and TS/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances. In addition, the list shall include the Offeror's security manager employed by the "Primary Contributor(s)" with a current Secret, Top Secret (TS), and/or TS/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances.	(b) The Offeror provides a list of key personnel by the "Primary Contributor(s)" with current Secret, Top Secret (TS), and TS/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances. In addition, the list shall include the Offeror's security manager employed by the "Primary Contributor(s)" with a current Secret, Top Secret (TS), and/or TS/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances.
(c) A description of the offeror's plan for obtaining and retaining personnel with necessary security clearances (Secret, Top Secret (TS), and TS/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances) upon the negotiated start date of task orders avoiding potential impacts to schedule or performance.	(c) The Offeror's adequately demonstrates an efficient and effective plan to obtain and retain personnel with necessary security clearances (Secret, Top Secret (TS), and TS/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances) to avoid potential impacts to schedule or performance.
will ensure clearances are maintained without additional cost or intervention from the Government, including currency of and renewal before expiration during the term of the contract performance to avoid potential impacts to schedule or performance	2.4.2. The Offeror's plan adequately describes how the Offeror's approach will ensure clearances are maintained without additional cost or intervention from the Government, including currency of and renewal before expiration during the term of the contract performance avoiding potential impacts to schedule or performance.

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APPENDIX B. THE RSM FOR A SYSTEMS ENGINEER POSITION WITHIN PEO SOLDIER'S ORGANIZATION

The RSM for a systems engineer position within PEO Soldier's organization. The RSM was received via e-mail (M. Hartso, personal communication, August 2, 2016).

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SUMMARY OF CANDIDATE SCORES

Systems Engineer, NH-0801-04

S: 15 August 2014

Board Member:

	Experience				Education	Training		Total
Candidates	KSA 1 40 pts max	KSA 2 40 pts max	KSA 3 20 pts max	*sub-total*	100 pts max	100 pts max	*sub-total*	
Merit Promotion List								
Candidate A	36	32	19	73.95	100	75	13.75	**87.7**
Candidate B	32	30	15	65.45	100	100	15	**80.45**
Candidate C	24	35	14	62.05	50	50	7.5	**69.55**

Experience (85%) - 100 points maximum		Exceptional mastery or knowledge indicated	Very Good mastery or knowledge indicated	Satisfactory mastery or knowledge indicated	Minimal mastery or knowledge indicated	No mastery or knowledge indicated
KSA 1	Knowledge of related engineering fields such as mechanical, electronic, electrical, software, materials, optical, and industrial engineering, to address technical problems within these specialties and to determine adequacy of recommendations.	31-40	21-30	11-20	1-10	0
KSA 2	Knowledge of and ability to understand user requirements versus other considerations such as technical feasibility cost standardization, etc., to determine whether proposed solutions are adequate for problems identified.	31-40	21-30	11-20	1-10	0
KSA 3	Knowledge of program management and system engineering techniques and practices in order to determine, establish, and monitor schedules, milestones, costs, and benefits from the development cycle through production, operation, and disposal.	15-20	12-14	7-11	1-6	0

Education (10%) - 100 points maximum	
Higher than Masters	100
Masters	50

Training (5%) - 100 points maximum	
Level III certified in Engineering and Level II or Higher in any other ACF	100
Level III certified in Engineering	75
Level II certified in Engineering	50

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APPENDIX C. ENGINEER/SCIENTIST POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FROM THE NOVEMBER 2014 PEO SOLDIER SETA SOLICITATION FOR LEVELS II THROUGH V

Position descriptions (levels II through V) from the November 2014 PEO Soldier SETA solicitation for the engineer/scientist. Source: ACC-APG (2014).

Labor Category	Description	Education/ Experience
Engineer/Scientist	Provides *the highest level of technical expertise* or specialty engineering for the entire engineering life-cycle in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. Performs top level design, development, fabrication, testing, installation, troubleshooting. Directs and manages large-scale, complex programs. Sets and maintains overall direction for a program; to control overall scope, budget, and schedule for complex, multi-project programs; and communicates with managing Directors and client executive management to ensure that critical program related issues are addressed. Coordinates efforts with other functions.	Level V

Engineer/Scientist	Provides ***senior-level technical expertise*** or specialty engineering for the entire engineering life-cycle in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. Performs top level design, development, fabrication, testing, installation, troubleshooting. Directs and manages large-scale, complex programs. Sets and maintains overall direction for a program; to control overall scope, budget, and schedule for complex, multi-project programs; and communicates with managing Directors and client executive management to ensure that critical program related issues are addressed. Coordinates efforts with other functions.	Level IV
Engineer/Scientist	Provides technical expertise or specialty engineering in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. Performs complex design, development, fabrication, testing, installation, troubleshooting. Works on complex projects requiring original thinking and new approaches. Experience directing and managing large-scale, complex programs.	Level III

Engineer/Scientist	Provides technical expertise or specialty engineering in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. May require experience in systems analysis and computer hardware or software support or other information technology functions. Acts as an internal expert in an engineering design/development area or act as a task leader in the design, testing, troubleshooting, technical support and documentation of products and processes.	Level II
Engineer/Scientist	Provides *the highest level of technical expertise* or specialty engineering for the entire engineering life-cycle in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. Performs top level design, development, fabrication, testing, installation, troubleshooting. Directs and manages large-scale, complex programs. Sets and maintains overall direction for a program; to control overall scope, budget, and schedule for complex, multi-project programs; and communicates with managing Directors and client executive management to ensure that critical program related issues are addressed. Coordinates efforts with other functions.	Level V

Engineer/Scientist	Provides *senior-level technical expertise* or specialty engineering for the entire engineering life-cycle in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. Performs top level design, development, fabrication, testing, installation, troubleshooting. Directs and manages large-scale, complex programs. Sets and maintains overall direction for a program; to control overall scope, budget, and schedule for complex, multi-project programs; and communicates with managing Directors and client executive management to ensure that critical program related issues are addressed. Coordinates efforts with other functions.	Level IV
Engineer/Scientist	Provides technical expertise or specialty engineering in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. Performs complex design, development, fabrication, testing, installation, troubleshooting. Works on complex projects requiring original thinking and new approaches. Experience directing and managing large-scale, complex programs.	Level III

Engineer/Scientist	Provides technical expertise or specialty engineering in one or more engineering disciplines such as: electronic engineering, electrical engineering, thermal engineering, optical engineering, materials engineering, quality engineering, aerospace engineering, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer engineering, interoperability analysis, system standards, military operations (ground, sea, air, and space), program analysis, requirements analysis, program planning, and cost analysis. May require experience in systems analysis and computer hardware or software support or other information technology functions. Acts as an internal expert in an engineering design/development area or act as a task leader in the design, testing, troubleshooting, technical support and documentation of products and processes.	Level II

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APPENDIX D. ENGINEERING LABOR CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS FROM THE PDM RADARS SETA SOLICITATION

Position descriptions for various engineer roles from the PdM Radars SETA solicitation. Source: ACC-APG (n.d.).

Labor Category	Description	Skill Level / Education Level
Test Engineer	The Test Engineer's primary responsibility is to oversee all test conducted on the Radar Systems at [Yuma Proving Ground] YPG and other remote locations as required by the Product Manager. During Live Fire Tests (LFTs) the test engineer will closely monitor and report system stability (hardware and software), emplacement/march order delays caused by operator errors. Test Engineer will analyze and report back to the Program Manager live fire test results which include the calculated Circular Error of Probability (CEP), Probability of Location (P/L), weapon classification statistics, number of false locations (FL's) and targets of opportunity (TOO's). The Test engineer also assists in conducting system inventory as part of the DD-250 process. Test engineer will work with the YPG Test Director to develop and tailor the shot matrix for each individual system based on range conflicts at YPG and the time allotted to have the system certified. Test engineer coordinates with the system Fielding Chief and YPG Transportation in order to get the system shipped to the next fielding location. Test engineer also coordinates the receipt of a new system with the customer. The Test engineer also supports additional exercises and systems as required by the Product Manager such as C-RAM Live Fire Tests Limited User Tests and other events.	Senior / Bachelor's Degree
Radar Engineer	Interfaces with a systems architect and client stakeholders. Generates hardware requirements, based on the user's needs and other constraints such as cost and schedule. Interfaces directly with a software architect or engineer(s), and with other Mechanical and Electrical Engineers. Performs cost-benefit analyses to determine the best methods or approaches for meeting the hardware requirements.	Senior / Bachelor's Degree

Systems Engineer	Program lead for the Systems Engineering Process. Leads the Engineering IPT, Configuration Control Board (CCB) and all design reviews. Manages Configuration Control for the PdM Radars portfolio of Radars. Responsible for all engineering documentation including the Systems Engineering Plan (SEP). Interfaces with both the user and the vendor to ensure that all requirements are understood. Responsible for the integration of the radar systems to the appropriate platform. Works with Prime to monitor and develop requirements. Works with contractor personnel and program management through the developmental testing phase and acceptance test phase of the radar Program. Responsible for the consolidation of all radar test data to develop test metrics to support in the overall reporting of system compliance. Provides support as required to PdM Radars Engineering team to report on issues identified during all aspects of testing.	Senior / Bachelor's Degree

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