

# AE EVALUATION

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

April 11, 2001

### HOW ARE EVALUATIONS UTILIZED?

Each evaluation, when properly completed, gets signed by the Director, Engineering and Design Division, and forwarded to Code AQ22. It is then converted to a standard DOD format (which differs slightly from our printout of Form 2631) and sent to the appropriate project manager for signature. After being signed/approved, it gets processed into the national ACASS ("Architect-Engineer Contract Administration Support System") which allows any government agency to view it when considering an award recommendation. A copy is also sent to the prime A&E firm evaluated.

Most importantly, the ratings from ACASS are used for future AE selection decisions. Whenever the same AE is being considered for another project as a prime consultant (including as part of a design/build team), DOD organizations will review the past performance identified in the ratings we provide. ***These ratings are probably the most important tool we have for hiring AE firms that perform well and rejecting AE firms that perform poorly.***

### HOW ARE OUR NUMERICAL SCORES "WEIGHTED" FOR EACH CATEGORY?

The development of a single formula was based on finding one that worked across all project types and gave adequate weight to the discipline(s) with the most project impact. Sheet count was recognized as the most straightforward and simplest method for accomplishing this goal. For example, the rating you provide for the category "*Plans/Specs Accurate and Coordinated*" is multiplied by the number of drawings for your particular discipline. Totals from each discipline that scored this category are then added together and the sum divided by the total number of drawings in the project.

We realize it's not perfect for all situations but, in most cases, the formula provides a reasonable reflection of an AE's overall performance.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SCORE A SUBCONTRACTOR INSTEAD OF THE PRIME AE?

The score is actually computed as if it was for the prime AE and is inserted into the ACASS only for the prime AE. However, the information you provide relative to a subcontractor is forwarded to the prime and, in all likelihood, the results are shared with the subcontractor.

As for award decisions, ratings that clearly distinguish the performance of a prime from that of a subcontractor can impact the selection for future work. If a prime AE is competing for a project with less-than-satisfactory subcontractors (per comments appearing in the ACASS reports), it might influence the selection committee to choose a different prime.

### CAN A SINGLE REVIEWER PROVIDE SEPARATE RATINGS FOR THE PRIME AND ONE OR MORE SUBCONTRACTORS?

No, the ACASS is programmed to process the ratings as if they are all for the prime AE. It makes sense because the prime AE holds the contractual responsibility with the government and is accountable for managing the performance of the subcontractors. In order to let the prime know that you specifically recognize special effort (positive or negative) by a subcontractor, be sure to input the subcontractor's name in the rating system's "BRANCH" screen/tab and include the name in any specific comments.

## WHY SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON WRITTEN COMMENTS?

The "weighting" system described above is the most important reason for including comments. For example, just because you provide an excellent score of "4" or "5" (for any particular category) for the two engineering drawings you reviewed, another reviewer may have provided an average score of "3" for the fifty drawings that reviewer looked at. The only way for the prime AE to learn that you appreciated the effort made on those two engineering drawings is to make a written comment. Otherwise, your score of "4" or "5" (times 2 drawings) is being "swallowed" by the score of "3" (times 50 drawings).

A slightly different logic is used as the reason for commenting on negative scores. AE firms are very sensitive to "below average" and "poor" scores. Of course, to maintain a successful business, that sensitivity is easy to understand. If necessary to provide a less than average score on any particular category, it's only fair to the AE that we take the small amount of time and effort necessary to explain why the score was given.

Please remember that the comments do not need to be extensive; whatever it takes to provide a brief explanation is all that's necessary. It's the written comments that help jog the memory at a later date when questions arise about a firm's performance. This is extremely important when a firm requests a debrief due to an unsatisfactory evaluation.

## SHOULD WE BE PROVIDING A SCORE FOR EACH CATEGORY?

Typically, the answer is "no." There may one day be a project in which you have sole responsibility for all aspects but, ordinarily, this doesn't occur. In fact, because of the "weighting" assigned to different disciplines based on sheet counts, scoring all categories can skew the results. It's safe to follow this rule of thumb:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Primary Score Responsibility</u>
Suitability of Design	CI41, CI42, CI43, CI44, CI45, CI48, CI49
Plans Clear and Detailed Sufficiently	CI41, CI42, CI43, CI44, CI45, CI48, CI49
Cooperation and Responsiveness	CI41, CI42, CI43, CI44, CI45, CI48, CI49, PM*
Plans/Specs Accurate and Coordinated	CI41, CI42, CI43, CI44, CI45, CI46*, CI48, CI49
Management and Adherence to Schedule	PM
QC Procedures and Execution	CI4A5
Site Investigation **	CI41, CI42, CI43, CI44, CI45, CI48, CI49
Meeting Cost Limitations	CI47
Environmentally Suitable	CI41, CI42, CI43, CI44, CI45, CI46*, CI48, CI49
Briefing and Presentation	CI41, CI42, CI43, CI44, CI45, CI46*, CI47*, CI48, CI49, PM*
Quality of Specifications	CI46
Quality of Cost Estimate	CI47

\* - indicates that this discipline may provide a score, if applicable, but the score will be greatly overshadowed by other discipline scores "weighted" by sheet counts.

\*\* - scoring should only be provided (whether new construction or renovation) by disciplines that feel site investigation played a key role in the design decisions.

If you realize you do not have primary scoring responsibility but feel you have information or insight that might sway the opinion of someone who does, please share that information with the other party. For example, if a reviewer in CI44 recognizes a problem with specific specification sections, it's important that the information be shared with CI46 and allow them to score the "Quality of Specification" category. CI46 will properly evaluate the entire specification and weigh the CI44 information accordingly. Otherwise, a separate CI44 score for this category will be multiplied by the electrical sheet count and outweigh any score by CI46.

## WHEN SHOULD AE EVALUATIONS BE PERFORMED?

Relative to policy ( [www.efdlant.navfac.navy.mil/download/lantops\\_04/policy/ae\\_review\\_policy.pdf](http://www.efdlant.navfac.navy.mil/download/lantops_04/policy/ae_review_policy.pdf) ) and logic, the AE knows the project should be technically complete at the 100% Prefinal submittal. When we finish our Prefinal review, we should be prepared to evaluate the AE's performance. Although it's acceptable to adjust the AE Evaluation during the Final submittal's 3-day backcheck and signing period, this should occur infrequently. **Remember, the AE was expected to submit complete, accurate and coordinated plans and specifications at the 100% Prefinal stage and should be held properly accountable.**

## WHAT IS AN "INTERIM EVALUATION?"

An Interim AE Evaluation may occur at any time prior to the 100% Prefinal submittal. This evaluation is usually initiated when an AE firm is not performing as should be expected and we feel the performance, if continued, may adversely impact the project budget or schedule. If a reviewer is concerned about an AE's performance relative to any specific factor, the concern should be immediately relayed to the AIC/EIC, CI4A5 and the project manager. An Interim AE Evaluation, completed in DIS, will be forwarded to the AE firm and that firm will be asked to meet with us and explain their substandard performance.

## HOW IS THE AE's EFFORT RELATIVE TO COMPLIANCE WITH CADD STANDARDS EVALUATED?

For the time being, CI4A5 will take the lead on evaluating this particular AE effort and the score and comments for "*QC Procedures and Execution*" will reflect it. However, until there is a change in the way compliance is checked (by each branch), CI4A5 will depend on input from branch reviewers as to how well the AE complied.