CPAR Quality Checklist

(updated March 2008)

This checklist will guide you in creating a quality CPAR which allows a reader, with no personal knowledge of your program/effort, to gain a complete understanding of the Contractor's performance.

Taking the time to prepare an accurate and complete CPAR helps ensure better quality in the products and services we buy now and those we plan to buy in the future!

Name:	Date:
Schedule # (for GSA orders):	
Contract Number:	
Order Number:	

Blocks 1 – 17: Registered Info is Accurate & Complete		
X	**Item**	**Remarks**
	Block 1: CAGE, DUNS, FSC and NAICS codes are correct.	Verify using "lookups" in CPARS or via CCR (http://www.ccr.gov/). Your Contracting Officer can assist you if you have questions.
	Block 2: Selected CPAR Report Type (i.e., Initial, Intermediate, Final Report, Addendum) is correct.	See the CPAR Report Type definitions in the CPARS Guide. DoD CPARS Guide
	Block 4: Business Sector is correct in accordance with the Business Sector definitions in the CPARS online help and in the CPARS Guide. DoD CPARS Guide	The business sector **must** be correct to ensure that you are using the correct CPAR form (i.e. Systems, Services/IT /Operations Support). If the business sector is incorrect, go back to the main menu, enter the contract number, select "Register a Contract", correct & save.
	Block 6: Location of Contract Performance is entered if work is not performed at Contractor's address. Include specific geographical location.	Some services require performance in severe weather conditions; specifying a geographical location (e.g., F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Cheyenne, Wyoming) allows the reader to take performance under such conditions into account.
	Blocks 7, 9, 11, 12: Contracting Officer, Contract Completion Date, Awarded Value, and Current Contract Dollar Value are up to date.	Contract Completion Date and Awarded Value should include **all** option periods, even if the options have not yet been exercised.

	Block 15: Subcontractors performing 25% or more or a critical aspect of the work are identified.	This block is not a place to assess subcontractor performance. Due to privity of contract, the Government can only write a performance assessment for a **prime** Contractor.
	Block 17: Contract Effort Description is comprehensive. All acronyms are spelled out when first used. The introductory paragraph of your Statement of Work is a good starting point for identifying the general scope of the contract. View sample Contract Effort Description.	Source Selection Officials use the Contract Effort Description to determine if your CPAR is relevant to their source selection. If the description is incomplete, you may be contacted to answer numerous questions.
Blocks 18 – 20: CPAR Ratings & Narrative are Consistent & Comprehensive		
X	**Item**	**Remarks**
	Block 18: Ratings are consistent with color/adjective definitions in CPARS Guide. View CPAR rating definitions.	Rating definitions are available in the CPARS online help function, the CPARS Guide and by clicking the link on the left. DoD CPARS Guide
	Block 18: Each assessment area is rated.	In order to release the CPAR, you must rate each assessment area, even if the rating is "N/A".
	Block 18: Ratings are consistent with other program metrics. View sample narrative showing consistency.	Ensure ratings are consistent with metrics such as award fee, cost performance reports, earned value management, program reviews, IPARs.
	Block 20: Narrative is provided to support each assessment area which has been rated. Even if the rating is "Green/Satisfactory", you must provide supporting narrative. View sample Green/Satisfactory Narrative.	See the assessment area definitions in the CPARS online help or the CPARS Guide for examples to consider when writing the assessment. DoD CPARS Guide
	Block 20: Narrative is fully detailed. It provides solid examples of specific accomplishments and problems. The narrative **must** address the benefit/impact that the Contractor's performance has had on the Government. View sample detailed narrative.	The narrative is the most critical part of the CPAR. Source Selection Officials rely on this narrative, not the ratings, in evaluating past performance. If the narrative is not clear and complete, you may receive numerous questions from Source Selection Officials.
	Block 20: Narrative is consistent with rating definitions. (view rating definitions).	It may be helpful to write the narrative first, and then assign a rating based on the rating definitions.

	Block 20: Narrative addresses the Contractor's efforts to meet small business subcontracting goals. View sample narrative regarding small business goals.	For Systems CPARs, address under "Subcontract Management". For Service/It/Operations Support CPARs, address under "Business Relations".
	Block 20: Narrative documents and explains resolution of previous and current problems. View sample narrative showing problem discussion.	
	Block 20: Narrative does not include statements which could result in an equitable adjustment or constructive change to the contract. Narrative statements are not personal, subjective, or vague. View sample narratives to avoid.	Do not use phrases such as "out-of-scope", "Contractor will lose business", "in our opinion", or "appeared". Do not use phrases which tell the Contractor how to do their job (e.g., "The Contractor should hire more people").
	Block 20: Recommendation of whether you (definitely would not, probably would not, might or might not, probably would, definitely would) award to this Contractor again is consistent with the CPAR ratings and narrative.	
Completing the CPAR		
X	**Item**	**Remarks**
	Contractor Representative is notified when the CPAR is available for comment. While CPARS provides an automatic email notification to the Contractor, it is always advisable to contact the Contractor via phonecon to let them know the CPAR is awaiting comment.	You must provide your CPARS Focal Point with the name and email address for your Contractor Representative in order to send the CPAR to the Contractor. If you have not provided the Focal Point with a Contractor name and email address, the system will not allow you to release the CPAR.
	Upon receipt of Contractor comments, all assessment areas indicated with a red checkmark are reviewed.	
	Assessing Official or Reviewing Official (as appropriate) selects option to "Close CPAR" upon CPAR completion.	In order for your CPAR to be completed and made available for use in source selections, you must select "**Close CPAR**" rather than simply selecting "Save".
View CPARS Best Practices		
View CPARS/Past Performance Tools & References		

CPAR Sample Effort Description and Narratives

Block 17: Sample Contract Effort Description

The Contractor is to provide DoD-oriented professional level engineering and technical support in executing analytical studies and/or experimental investigations involving vulnerability and hardening of ship and submarine structures and equipment subjected to conventional or nuclear weapons effects, above or under water. Task efforts range from routine application of vulnerability assessment and hardening design methods to development and application of state-of-the-art damage prediction algorithms and analysis methods to evaluate ship and submarine systems response to weapons loads. This includes development of improved vulnerability assessment computer codes, application to evaluate new ship designs against postulated threats, and formulation of hardening options to enhance ship survivability. Design and testing of ship hardening concepts and prototype passive protection systems are also included.

Blocks 18 & 20: Sample Narrative Showing Consistency with Other Program Metrics

The Contractor has done an excellent job in keeping the program on schedule. The Contractor has implemented a new project management system which allows for advanced placement of subcontracts to ensure early subcontract delivery. Since the kits being produced by the Contractor rely heavily on the cables and radios provided by the subcontractors, this new project management system has resulted in a major positive impact to the program. Component parts are received at the Contractor early, thus allowing for early discovery of any component defects and prompt part replacement, as well as early starts on production runs. The Contractor's efforts have resulted in a Schedule Performance Index (SPI) of 1.10. In addition, the Contractor was commended for this effort at the most recent program review.

Block 20: Sample Green/Satisfactory Narrative

Quality of Product or Service: Green/Satisfactory – This contract is for the collection of refuse at XXX Air Force Base located near Anytown, USA. As part of its services, Contractor XXX is required to pick up 87 dumpsters across an approximate 30 square mile area, 12 hazardous waste containers, and 7 bio-hazardous waste material containers at the Medical Clinic located at the base. *Given the nature of the services performed for this contract and the schedule for refuse collection, it would be difficult to obtain above a Satisfactory rating for performance on this contract.* During this evaluation period, Contractor XXX met all of its refuse collection requirements on time as stated in the contract. Further Contractor XXX ensured that all of the tops of the dumpsters were closed after dumping to ensure that no foreign object debris (FOD) entered the flight line area despite the locale being in an area prone to high winds. There were no incidents of improper storage or disposal of the hazardous waste or bio-hazardous waste material during this reporting period. *Therefore, the rating of Satisfactory indicates performance within the requirements of the contract and that there were no problems encountered during this reporting period with Contractor XXX.*

Block 20: Sample CPAR Narrative

Insufficient Narrative:
Business Relations: Dark Blue/Excellent – Contractor has exhibited excellent business relations with all customers during this reporting period. The Contractor has a positive history of reasonable and cooperative behavior with this office. They have assessed the proposal submittals and initiated corrective action plans in an adequate manner. The integration and coordination activities that the Contractor has taken to execute the contract have been excellent. All deliverables have been on time.

The example above clearly conveys that the Government was very pleased with the Contractor's performance. However, it fails to provide specific examples of performance and does not detail single or multiple events of benefit to the Government as required by the Dark Blue/Excellent definition. This narrative would be of limited direct use in a source selection.

A Better Way To Write This:

Business Relations: Dark Blue/Excellent – The Contractor has exhibited excellent business relations with all customers during this reporting period; this is evident in the Contractor's communications with Government personnel, its own employees, and its vendors/subcontractors. This is, in part, due to the Contractor instituting a monthly team meeting between all evaluators of the mission team. In addition to the monthly team meeting, the Contractor implemented semi-monthly working group meetings at the functional levels which have garnered an exchange of information which has been of benefit to the Government in allowing issues to be discussed and resolved at the functional level. As a result, the Government has seen quicker notification of issues and resolution of problems. The Contractor has a positive history of reasonable and cooperative behavior with this office. They have assessed the proposal submittals (23 submittals in 12 months) and initiated corrective action plans (within 7 days of receipt) in an adequate manner. The integration and coordination activities that the Contractor has taken to execute the contract have been excellent. All 17 deliverables have been on time with no need for rework or clarification, which has allowed the Government to distribute them to their users in a timely fashion, thereby meeting the mission needs.

Block 20: Sample Narrative Addressing Small Business Subcontracting Goals

During this evaluation period, the Contractor met all of its small business contracting goals. Through its aggressive market research, the Contractor was also able to locate two HUBZone and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small businesses to provide technical support in an area with historically limited sources.

Block 20: Sample Narrative Addressing Previous and Current Problems

XYZ Services has received a Very Good rating for Cost Control. While the Contractor aggressively managed site supplies and equipment and continually looked for ways to reduce costs and expenses, during the onset of this evaluation period, the Contractor failed to identify items in the warehouse which could have been disposed of through

Defense Reutilization Marketing Offices. This oversight resulted in additional funds being expended ($27,000) for warehouse storage fees. This problem was identified in a random property audit and, although the additional storage funds had already been expended, the Contractor worked over the weekend to ensure the items were ready for disposal by the following week. This Contractor has since initiated its own audit/self inspection schedule and inventory control log to prevent this problem from occurring.

Block 20: Sample Narrative Statements to Avoid

The Contractor's performance in this area was exemplary. They were proactive in satisfying Electrical Kit Product Performance requirements. They produced a superior product for the customer. In many instances, they performed engineering tasks **outside the scope of the contract.**

"Outside the scope of the contract" – This phrase should not be in a CPAR narrative. It implies that the Contractor performed work not legally required and is eligible for an equitable adjustment to the contract. An equitable adjustment means that the program office/customer will have to come up with additional funds to pay for the additional tasks.

In our opinion, the Contractor's performance in the systems engineering area was very poor. Kit hardware deficiencies were observed and it **appeared** that the Contractor lacked systems engineering knowledge and expertise. **We believe** that some of the contractual kit requirements will not be met. **It is our hope** that additional factory testing will eliminate these hardware deficiencies. If management had responded in a timely manner, the requirement might have been satisfied. Additionally, **we were not happy** with the initial factory testing, and **did not like** their "fly and fix" philosophy of testing.

"In our opinion" – This is a subjective phrase which gives the impression that there is no firm evidence to prove poor performance.

"Appeared" – This is a speculative remark which does not prove that they lacked systems engineering knowledge.

"We believe" – This is also a speculative remark. It does not prove that they did not satisfy some kit requirements.

"It is our hope" – This statement does not belong in a CPAR narrative. The issue is whether the Contractor will correct the deficiencies using factory testing. If so, the narrative should indicate the pending corrections. If not, justification should be provided as to why the factory testing failed to correct the problems.

"We were not happy" – This is an emotional and subjective statement which should be avoided. The CPAR should reflect justification for the successes/failures from the factory test.

"We did not like" – The customer should evaluate the results of the fly and fix tests in detail, not their testing technique.

The Contractor was late in delivering all of the 100 electric kits. **We think** that one reason is that their systems engineering effort was poor due to several electrical component deficiencies. Another reason **could be** that their ability to manage the electrical subcontracts left much to be desired. We established a 6 month extension to the contract. **We hope** they can deliver the 100 kits without significant discrepancies.

"We think" – This phrase implies that the customer has not proven the Contractor's poor performance with evidence.

"Could be" – This phrase indicates that the customer is not sure that the reason for the deficiencies is poor management. There is no proof of poor management here.

"We hope" – This phrase implies that the delivery of the kits without deficiencies in the time period allotted is a desire, not a contractual requirement.

CPARS Best Practices

Prior to the Start of the Assessment Period

- Discuss performance expectations with the Contractor.
- Provide the Contractor and CPAR evaluators with a copy of the CPARS Guide for your Service. Discuss the areas to be evaluated and the rating definitions.
    - Can be done at post-award conference for new contract awards.
    - Can be done during annual program/evaluation meetings for existing contracts.
- While it is good to give your Contractor a general idea of the performance you're expecting in order to achieve the various ratings, you should avoid entering into a "set in stone" agreement stating that if the Contractor does X, you will automatically assign rating Y. Keep in mind that changes in contract scope or mission emphasis may require you to reprioritize your needs.

During the Assessment Period

- Communicate with your Contractor! Be sure to provide feedback on Contractor performance throughout the assessment period, rather than waiting until you send them the CPAR. Continuous communication gives the Contractor the opportunity to make corrections as necessary, which will result in improved contract performance. The Government evaluation of Contractor performance should not be a mystery to the Contractor!
- Document contract performance regularly. Documentation methods include status reports, Earned Value Management data, monthly Certificates of Service, award fee evaluations, program review meeting minutes, etc. This will ensure that you have accurate and complete information available when it is time to write the CPAR, and should make the process much easier. Supporting documentation also helps follow-on evaluators in the event of personnel turnover.

Preparing the CPAR Ratings & Narrative

- Ensure that the ratings are consistent with the rating definitions (view rating definitions). Inconsistent ratings are one of the greatest sources of Contractor and Source Selection Official confusion. Following the rating definitions helps ensure that your CPAR is consistent with those written by other Assessing Officials.
- The CPAR narrative should reflect an integrated assessment from the entire program team, such as Program Managers and Deputies, IPT Leads and Deputies, Contracting Officer's Representatives, Contracting Officers and Specialists, Engineering experts, Logistics experts, DCMA Program Integrators, and external customers.
- The narrative is the most important part of the CPAR; Source Selection Officials rely most heavily on the narrative when evaluating a Contractor's past performance and assessing the level of risk. Keep in mind that they may be unfamiliar with your program; your narrative should be detailed enough to enable them to understand the work being performed under your contract.
- Ensure that your narrative:
    - Is provided for each performance area you assess.
    - Is consistent with the rating definitions.

- Is consistent with other methods of evaluating Contractor performance (e.g. Earned Value Management, Program Reviews, Informal Performance Assessment Reports, and Award Fee Determinations).
- Addresses changes in the ratings from prior reports.
- Recognizes the Government's role in the Contractor's inability to meet requirements.
- Recognizes the risk inherent in the contract effort.
- Is based on objective data.
- Indicates which strengths/weaknesses were major/minor.
- Tells the "whole story".
- Documents resolution of problems identified in previous assessments.
- Is accurate, fair, and comprehensive.

Completing the CPAR

- Review the Contractor's comments thoroughly and take the time to acknowledge their concerns. Addressing these issues in a modified CPAR or in the Reviewing Official comments will help Source Selection Officials understand both viewpoints.
- If the Government and Contractor disagree on the CPAR ratings and narrative, consider holding a meeting to discuss. There is no substitute for good, face-to-face communication. Consider granting the Contractor an extension of their 30 day comment period in order to allow them to fully address their concerns.
- If no Contractor comments are received, document the fact that the Government took reasonable steps to notify the Contractor that the CPAR was available for comment. This can be done by keeping a copy of the electronic email notification provided to the Contractor when the CPAR was released, documenting a telephone conversation in which the Contractor was notified that the CPAR was ready for comment, or including the efforts made to contact the Contractor in the Reviewing Official narrative.

Taking the time to prepare an accurate and complete CPAR helps ensure better quality in the products and services we buy now and those we plan to buy in the future!

CPAR Rating Definitions

Dark Blue (Exceptional). Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds many to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed was accomplished with few minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were highly effective.

Note: *To justify an* ***Exceptional*** *rating, you should identify multiple significant events in each category and state how it was a benefit to the GOVERNMENT. However, a singular benefit could be of such magnitude that it alone constitutes an Exceptional rating. Also, there should have been NO significant weaknesses identified.*

Purple (Very Good). Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds some to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed was accomplished with some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were effective.

Note: *To justify a* ***Very Good*** *rating, you should identify a significant event in each category and state how it was a benefit to the GOVERNMENT. Also there should have been no significant weaknesses identified.*

Green (Satisfactory). Performance meets contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor appear or were satisfactory.

Note: *To justify a* ***Satisfactory*** *rating, there should have been only minor problems, or major problems the contractor recovered from without impact to the contract. Also there should have been NO significant weaknesses identified. Per DoD policy, a fundamental principle of assigning ratings is that contractors will not be assessed a rating lower than Satisfactory solely for not performing beyond the requirements of the contract.*

Yellow (Marginal). Performance does not meet some contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed reflects a serious problem for which the contractor has not yet identified corrective actions. The contractor's proposed actions appear only marginally effective or were not fully implemented.

Note: *To justify* ***Marginal*** *performance, you should identify a significant event in each category that the contractor had trouble overcoming and state how it impacted the GOVERNMENT. A* ***Marginal*** *rating should be supported by referencing the management tool that notified the contractor of the contractual deficiency (e.g. Management, Quality, Safety, or Environmental Deficiency Report or letter).*

Red (Unsatisfactory). Performance does not meet most contractual requirements and recovery is not likely in a timely manner. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains a serious problem(s) for which the contractor's corrective actions appear or were ineffective.

Note: *To justify an* ***Unsatisfactory*** *rating, you should identify multiple significant events in each category that the contractor had trouble overcoming and state how it impacted the GOVERNMENT. However, a singular problem could be of such serious magnitude that it alone constitutes an unsatisfactory rating. An* ***Unsatisfactory*** *rating should be supported by referencing the management tools used to notify the contractor of the contractual deficiencies (e.g. Management, Quality, Safety, or Environmental Deficiency Reports, or letters).*

NOTE 1: Plus or minus signs may be used to indicate an improving (+) or worsening (-) trend insufficient to change the assessment status.

NOTE 2: N/A (not applicable) should be used if the ratings are not going to be applied to a particular area for evaluation.

CPARS/Past Performance Tools and References

Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) Home Page:
http://www.cpars.csd.disa.mil/

Federal Past Performance Information Retrieval System: http://www.ppirs.gov/

DOD Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System Policy Guide:
http://www.cpars.csd.disa.mil/cparsfiles/pdfs/DoD%20CPARS%20Guide%20June%202007.pdf

DoD Guide to Collection and Use of Past Performance Information:
http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/Docs/PPI_Guide_2003_final.pdf

Various CPARS Policy Letters:
http://www.cpars.csd.disa.mil/cparsfiles/cpars/refmatl.htm