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# ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION BULLETIN

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**Subject:** Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) Transition Guidance

**Applicability:** Guidance

1. References:

- a. Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 42.15, Contractor Performance Information
- b. GAO-09-374, Federal Contractors: Better Performance Information Needed to Support Agency Contract Award Decisions, dated 23 April 2009.
- c. Engineering Regulation 415-1-17, Construction Contractor Performance Evaluations, dated 24 January 2012.
- d. DD Form 2626, Performance Evaluation (Construction), dated June 1994.
- e. Engineer Pamphlet 715-1-7, Architect-Engineer Contracting in USACE, dated 29 February 2012.
- f. DD Form 2631, Performance Evaluation (Architect-Engineer), dated April 1999.

2. The purpose of this ECB is to provide guidance for Architect-Engineer and Construction Contractor evaluations created in the new CPARS system. In April 2009, GAO issued report 09-374, Better Performance Information Needed to Support Agency Contract Award Decisions. The report in part recommended the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), "Standardize evaluation factors and rating scales government wide for documenting contractor performance." As a direct result of this report OFPP is implementing a single system to be used by all Federal agencies for the collection of past performance information for use in the source selection process. The CPARS, ACASS, and CCASS modules will be merged into a single application under the CPARS name and the ACASS and CCASS will no longer exist.

3. No new evaluations may be initiated in ACASS, CCASS, or CPARS after 28 May 2014 at 11:59 PM ET. All existing evaluations initiated prior to 28 May 2014 must be completed with all required signatures by 27 June 2014 at 11:59 PM ET or contract data, ratings, and narratives will

be lost and the assessment will be required to be recreated under the merged application available on 01 July 2014. It is imperative that all evaluations be completed in ACASS, CCASS, and CPARS prior to the merger.

The Resident Management System (RMS) evaluation link will be taken offline on 28 May 2014. If the intent is to issue an unsatisfactory evaluation, it is recommended that field offices target an earlier submission date to allow for additional processing time. This will allow Contractors the full 30 day review period and time for field offices to complete evaluations before the 27 June 2014 blackout.

4. The new CPARS format will have fewer categories to evaluate contractor performance and require narratives, rather than an itemized list of detailed performance areas. Each assessment area has a text field that allows up to 24,000 characters to be entered. It is important that Assessing Officials capture the most important performance elements of our contractors in the simplified CPARS structure. The new CPARS categories are:

- a. Quality
- b. Schedule
- c. Cost Control
- d. Management
- e. Utilization of Small Business
- f. Regulatory Compliance
- g. Other Evaluation Area (1) – See attachments to this ECB for required information
- h. Other Evaluation Area (2) – Optional
- i. Other Evaluation Area (3) – Optional

Although these broader categories will no longer highlight specific performance disciplines and attributes, an appropriate level of details is still attainable by evaluation initiators. Therefore, it is recommended that the narratives under each of these categories be factual, concise, to the point, and include information that will make a meaningful difference when reviewed by source selection boards.

This ECB includes two enclosures that provide the minimum required evaluation criteria to be used when completing contractor evaluations: (1) Typical USACE Construction Contractor Performance Evaluation Standards, and (2) Typical USACE Architect-Engineer Performance Evaluation Standards. These typical standards are modified versions of DD Form 2626 and DD Form 2631 that better align with CPARS.

5. Revisions to FAR Subpart 42.15 require that evaluation rating narratives include specific benefit(s) and impact(s) to the Government when ratings other than satisfactory are selected. Detailed descriptions on the use of Exceptional, Very Good, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory ratings can be found in FAR 42.1503, Tables 42-1 and 42-2.

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6. CPARS has multiple web-based training modules available for users located here: <http://www.cpars.gov/allapps/cpcbtdlf.htm> . It is highly recommended that all personnel involved with Contractor evaluations take the 40-minute CPARS merge on-demand training. Additional training modules may be completed at the discretion of field offices.
7. This guidance only applies to official interim and final evaluations completed by Assessing Officials. Field offices are not required to change any local documentation processes and are encouraged to maintain additional detailed performance notes in local files. At a minimum, CPARS requires that evaluations be prepared annually beginning with the period of assessment starting on the date of award. Assessments are to reach the completed phase in CPARS within 120 days after the annual anniversary date.
8. Engineering Regulation 415-1-17, Construction Contractor Performance Evaluations is being revised to reflect these changes. Engineer Pamphlet 715-1-7, Architect-Engineer Contracting in USACE will also reflect these changes in the next update.
9. The point of contact for this ECB is Rick Calloway, CECW-CE, 202-761-7500.

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## Typical USACE Construction Contractor Performance Evaluation Standards

1. Evaluation Areas. This area outlines mandatory performance elements to be included in assessments for Construction Contractors to include Design-Build contracts. The main categories listed (A-I) are fixed elements within the revised Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), which replaces the Construction Contractor Appraisal Support System (CCASS). All USACE construction contract assessments will include safety as a standalone rating element. Each narrative will be individually rated using Exceptional, Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal, Unsatisfactory, or N/A. The overall rating will be selected from a range of (would/would not) recommend.
  - A. Quality. This narrative should reflect the contractor's management of the quality control program, the quality of the work itself, and the product performance outlined in the contract's quality objectives. Factors to consider:
    - i. Adequacy and implementation of Contractor's Quality Control Plan
    - ii. Contractor's ability to maintain quality control and accuracy of QC documentation
    - iii. Implementation of the 3-phase inspection process
    - iv. Quality of workmanship
    - v. Work is in accordance with the plans and specifications
  - B. Schedule. This narrative should assess the timeliness of the Contractor against the required completion date of the contract, milestones, delivery schedules, and administrative requirements. Factors to consider:
    - i. Quality and timeliness of the initial schedule submission
    - ii. Adherence to the approved schedule
    - iii. Communication and submittal of schedule revisions
    - iv. Corrective action taken by the Contractor when schedule has slipped through fault of Contractor
  - C. Cost Control. This rating area may be rated N/A for fixed-price contracts. Factors to consider for cost-type contracts:
    - i. Were the Contractor's billings current, accurate, and complete?
    - ii. Are the Contractor's budgetary internal controls adequate?
    - iii. Was innovation used that resulted in cost savings?
  - D. Management. The management narrative should reflect the Contractor's internal and external day-to-day business operations as they relate to meeting contract requirements. Factors to consider:
    - i. Management of resources and key personnel
    - ii. Coordination and control of subcontractor(s)

- iii. Review and resolution of subcontractor's issues
  - iv. Management responsiveness
- E. Utilization of Small Business. This category may be rated N/A for small business contracts. This area must be rated for all contracts and task orders that contain a small business subcontracting plan. Assess compliance with all terms and conditions in the contract relating to Small Business participation. Factors to consider:
- i. Compliance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.219-8, Utilization of Small Business
  - ii. Compliance with FAR 52.219-9, Small Business Subcontracting Plan
  - iii. Contractor's good faith effort(s) to meet contract goals and requirements
- F. Regulatory Compliance. This rating area shall focus on environmental and labor laws and regulations. Safety regulations shall be addressed in item (G.) below. Factors to consider:
- i. Contractor's enforcement of laws and regulations
  - ii. Correction of deficiencies when out of compliance
  - iii. Communication of laws and regulations to subcontractor(s)
  - iv. Compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act
- G. Other Evaluation Area (1). This narrative is required for Construction Contracts to be named "Safety." Assessing Officials are required to provide a safety rating for "Other Evaluation Area (1)" in CPARS. Safety factors to consider:
- i. Adequacy of Contractor's Safety Plan
  - ii. Implementation of Safety Plan
  - iii. Identification and correction of safety deficiencies
  - iv. Quantitative evaluation of accidents and injuries
- H. Other Evaluation Area (2). This narrative is not mandatory and can be used at the discretion of the local Assessing Official.
- I. Other Evaluation Area (3). This narrative is not mandatory and can be used at the discretion of the local Assessing Official.
2. Evaluation Ratings Definitions. Reference FAR 42.1503 Table 42-1 for revised evaluation rating definitions. A simplified version of the table is provided here:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Contract Requirements</b>	<b>Problems</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b>
<b>Exceptional</b>	Exceeds Many - Gov't Benefit(s)	Few Minor	Highly Effective
<b>Very Good</b>	Exceeds Some - Gov't Benefit	Some Minor	Effective
<b>Satisfactory</b>	Meets All	Some Minor	Satisfactory

<b>Marginal</b>	Does Not Meet Some – Gov't Impact	Serious: Recovery Still Possible	Marginally Effective; Not Fully Implemented
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Does Not Meet Most – Gov't Impact(s)	Serious: Recovery Not Likely	Ineffective

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

For rating definitions to be used only for Utilization of Small Business, reference FAR 42.1503 Table 42-2.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities.** It is USACE policy that a designated representative of the construction office responsible for monitoring contractor performance, such as the Resident Engineer, Area Engineer, or Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO), evaluates the Construction Contractor's performance in CPARS. Official CPARS guidance, section 3.5 provides suggested responsibilities for completing assessments that may be modified by each agency.
  - A. **CPARS Focal Point (FP).** The Focal Point(s) and alternates shall come from Construction Division (or its equivalent responsible for construction). Each District can determine how many FPs are needed to manage evaluations. Assignments shall be coordinated with the Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO) for information purposes.
  - B. **Assessing Official Representative (AOR).** Multiple AORs can be assigned to input the narratives for each evaluation and shall be at the Quality Assurance, Office Engineer, or Project Engineer level. When multiple AORs are assigned to an evaluation, coordination is needed to determine who will forward the evaluation to the Assessing Official (AO) when narratives are complete. Depending on each District's workflow, it may be advantageous to assign a FP or alternate FP as an AOR for administrative purposes.
  - C. **Assessing Official (AO).** The AO shall come from the Construction Division (or its equivalent) responsible for construction. The AO shall be at the Resident Engineer or Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) level.
    - i. It is recommended that before the AO sends the Contractor an assessment with a rating of "I would not recommend them for similar requirements in the future," a copy of the evaluation first be provided to the Reviewing Official (RO) and PCO.
  - D. **Reviewing Official (RO).** The RO shall be at one level above the AO, or the Chief of Construction Branch or Division.
    - i. Formal CPARS guidance recommends RO involvement when a Contractor Representative chooses not to concur with an evaluation. HQUSACE strongly recommends that the RO remains involved with the process as determined by the local Districts.

Local variations to the AOR, AO, and RO roles may be determined and documented by the Districts.

4. CPARS Helpful Links. Reference the following hyperlinks for additional CCASS to CPARS transition information:
  - A. CPARS Guidance: Revised guidance not posted yet. (Attached to request for comment)
  - B. CPARS Merge FAQs: <http://www.cpars.gov/merge-faqs/merge-faqs.htm>
  - C. CPAR Quality Checklist:  
<http://www.cpars.gov/cparsfiles/pdfs/CPARSQualityChecklist.pdf>

## Typical USACE Architect-Engineer Contractor Performance Evaluation Standards

1. Evaluation Areas. This area outlines mandatory performance elements to be included in assessments for Architect-Engineer (AE) Contractors. The main categories listed (A-I) are fixed elements within the revised Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), which replaces the Architect-Engineer Contract Administration Support System (ACASS). All USACE AE Contractor assessments will include a post-award construction phase services rating when in the AE's scope. Each narrative will be individually rated using Exceptional, Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal, Unsatisfactory, or N/A. The overall rating will be selected from a range of (would/would not) recommend.
  - A. Quality. This narrative should reflect the contractor's management of the quality control program, the quality of the work itself, and the product performance outlined in the contract's quality objectives. Factors to consider:
    - i. Did the AE follow their Quality Management Plan?
    - ii. Did the AE perform appropriate site investigations to support the engineering services?
    - iii. Were the plans, specifications or other deliverables accurate and coordinated?
    - iv. Were the deliverables clear and sufficiently detailed?
    - v. Did the AEs provide a functional and useable product as was intended by the scope of AE services?
    - vi. For facility designs, did the AE provide an appropriate aesthetically designed facility?
    - vii. Did the AE provide appropriate and timely responses to the review comments and correct the deliverables as required?
    - viii. Was the design prepared in accordance with the present sustainability and environmental requirements?
    - ix. Did the AE develop and implement any innovative approaches or technologies to improve the design product?
    - x. If a solicitation was prepared and issued, was it biddable with a minimum number of amendments?
    - xi. Were all design products (CADD files, specifications, design analysis, studies, etc.) submitted in the appropriate format?
  - B. Schedule. This narrative should assess the timeliness of the Contractor against the required completion date of the contract, milestones, delivery schedules, and administrative requirements. Factors to consider:
    - i. Did the AE adhere to the schedule within their contract/task order?
    - ii. Were all deliverables submitted as required per the schedule?
    - iii. If the AE was not able to adhere to their schedule, did they develop a corrective action plan and follow this plan?



- C. **Cost Control.** This element is typically used to evaluate Cost Contracts. For AE contracts, the purpose of this element will be to evaluate the AE's cost estimating performance. If there was no cost estimating in the AE's scope, then this area shall be N/A. Factors to consider:
- i. If a design, was the cost within the cost limitations specified in the contract/task order?
  - ii. For other products such as studies, was meaningful cost data provided to support the results of the product?
  - iii. Were the submitted estimates performed with sufficient detail and accuracy?
  - iv. If a Value Engineering study was performed, was AE cooperative in implementing approved recommendations?
- D. **Management.** The management narrative should reflect the Contractor's internal and external day-to-day business operations as they relate to meeting contract requirements. Factors to consider:
- i. Did the AE's project manager provide the appropriate leadership?
  - ii. Did the AE exhibit reasonable and cooperative behavior?
  - iii. Did the AE manage their consultants?
  - iv. Did the key personnel identified to participate remain involved?
- E. **Utilization of Small Business.** This category may be rated N/A for small business contracts. This area must be rated for all contracts and task orders that contain a small business subcontracting goal. Assess compliance with all terms and conditions in the contract relating to Small Business participation. Factors to consider:
- i. Compliance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.219-8, Utilization of Small Business
  - ii. Compliance with FAR 52.219-9, Small Business Subcontracting Plan
  - iii. Contractor's good faith effort(s) to meet contract goals and requirements
- F. **Regulatory Compliance.** Architect-Engineer evaluations shall be N/A unless a specific component of design or engineering services is governed by an environmental regulation is important enough to be broken out from the quality rating (A.) above.
- G. **Other Evaluation Area (1).** This narrative is required for AE Contracts to be named "Post-Award Construction Phase Services." Assessing Officials are required to provide a Construction Phase Services rating for "Other Evaluation Area (1)" in CPARS. This rating area will be N/A for evaluations completed before the award of a construction contract and Architect-Engineer deliverables that are not constructed. Factors to consider:
- i. Was the constructed facility based on the design both maintainable and operable?
  - ii. Did the plans reflect the true conditions and were the plans clear, sufficiently detailed, accurate and coordinated?
  - iii. Was the design constructible and had minimal errors?

- iv. Was the AE responsive in correcting errors and omissions of the engineering services?
- v. Did the AE perform timely and accurate review of shop drawings and submittals?
- vi. Was the AE responsive in providing technical assistance as required by the contract?

H. Other Evaluation Area (2). This narrative is not mandatory and can be used at the discretion of the local Assessing Official.

I. Other Evaluation Area (3). This narrative is not mandatory and can be used at the discretion of the local Assessing Official.

2. Evaluation Ratings Definitions. Reference FAR 42.1503 Table 42-1 for revised evaluation rating definitions. A simplified version of the table is provided here:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Contract Requirements</b>	<b>Problems</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b>
<b>Exceptional</b>	Exceeds Many - Gov't Benefit(s)	Few Minor	Highly Effective
<b>Very Good</b>	Exceeds Some - Gov't Benefit	Some Minor	Effective
<b>Satisfactory</b>	Meets All	Some Minor	Satisfactory
<b>Marginal</b>	Does Not Meet Some – Gov't Impact	Serious: Recovery Still Possible	Marginally Effective; Not Fully Implemented
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Does Not Meet Most – Gov't Impact(s)	Serious: Recovery Not Likely	Ineffective

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

For rating definitions to be used only for Utilization of Small Business, reference FAR 42.1503 Table 42-2.

3. Roles and Responsibilities. It is USACE policy that the Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO), or a designated representative of the engineering office responsible for monitoring contractor performance, will evaluate the Architect-Engineer Contractor's performance and prepare a performance assessment in CPARS. Official CPARS guidance, section 3.5 provides suggested responsibilities for completing assessments that may be modified by each agency.

A. CPARS Focal Point (FP). The Focal Point(s) and alternates shall come from Engineering Division (or its equivalent responsible for Architect-Engineer Contractor oversight). Each District can determine how many FPs are needed to manage evaluations. Assignments shall be coordinated with the Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO) for information purposes.

- B. Assessing Official Representative (AOR). The AOR will be usually assigned to the Engineering Division staff member who performs oversight of the AE contract and its Quality Assurance Plan. Multiple AORs can be assigned to an assessment and when multiple AORs are assigned, coordination is needed to determine who will forward the assessment to the Assessing Official (AO) when narratives are complete. Depending on each District's workflow, it may be advantageous to assign a FP or alternate FP as an AOR for administrative purposes.

When an Architect-Engineer Contractor's product is constructed, the FP shall assign a COR overseeing construction as an additional AOR. This AOR will be solely responsible for providing an assessment of the Architect-Engineer Contractor's Post-Award Construction Phase Services as outlined in item 1.G above.

- i. It is recommended that the AOR overseeing construction review the Architect-Engineer Contractor's interim quality evaluation outlined in item 1.A above. The AOR overseeing construction shall provide feedback to the AO and make a recommendation to either maintain or change the Contractor's quality rating. The AO will determine what, if any changes are made to the previous quality rating.

- C. Assessing Official (AO). The AO shall come from the Engineering Branch or Division responsible for providing Quality Assurance on the contract. The AO shall be at the Branch or Section Chief level and is typically the COR.

- i. It is recommended that before the AO sends the Contractor an assessment with a rating of "I would not recommend them for similar requirements in the future," a copy of the evaluation first be provided to the Reviewing Official (RO) and PCO.

- D. Reviewing Official (RO). The RO will normally be the Chief of the Engineering Branch or Division responsible for providing Quality Assurance on the contract.

- i. Formal CPARS guidance recommends RO involvement when a Contractor Representative chooses not to concur with an evaluation. HQUSACE strongly recommends that the RO remains involved with the process as determined by the local Districts.

Local variations to the AOR, AO, and RO roles may be determined and documented by the Districts. For example, it may not be appropriate for the Engineering Branch or Division to lead evaluations on Planning projects.

4. CPARS Helpful Links. Reference the following hyperlinks for additional ACASS to CPARS transition information:

- A. Revised CPARS Guidance: <http://www.cpars.gov/main/cparsmain.htm> (On 01 JUL 14)  
B. Merge FAQs: <http://www.cpars.gov/merge-faqs/merge-faqs.htm>  
C. Quality Checklist: <http://www.cpars.gov/cparsfiles/pdfs/CPARSQualityChecklist.pdf>