



# PROCUREMENT PROCESSING GUIDE

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## **BACKGROUND**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is constantly seeking improved means to manage and deliver data and information to citizens and businesses. Areas of focus include weather and water forecasts, search and rescue, climate change, environmental images, coastal maps, and ecosystems management. NOAA's past Information Technology (IT) environment, contracting, and governance practices limited the organization's ability to readily leverage economies of scale. Also limited was providing line-of-sight visibility and situational awareness of all IT strategy and operations.

NOAALink established a fully integrated acquisition approach, one built on well-defined processes and a framework, applying commercial best practices to conduct procurement activities. Consistent with the NOAA Business Operations Manual (BOM), NOAALink supports NOAA's goals to reduce costs and improve procurement productivity while delivering increased accuracy for reporting of procurement and financial information. NOAALink promotes collaborative strategy, planning, architecture, and execution. It encourages shared decision-making across government and business partners. NOAALink enables the IT organizations at NOAA and the broader Department of Commerce (DOC) community to partner with industry to acquire a broad range of cost-effective, enterprise-wide IT solutions, all the while improving IT service delivery and supporting the achievement of the following goals:

- Operate IT as a customer-focused service provider
- Establish secure, enterprise-wide IT standardized solutions
- Maximize agility and innovation in IT service delivery
- Deliver cost-effective IT solutions
- Foster strategic partnerships
- Create effective IT governance
- Build robust high performance computing capabilities

A March 2, 2011, memorandum entitled 'Mandatory Use of NOAALink Program and Contracts for Information Technology Products and Services' established mandatory use of NOAALink to procure IT infrastructure products and services. The category of IT included all common, widely-used, or enterprise-level services, functions, or systems that indirectly serve mission activities and provide general organizational, management, and administrative computing and communications capability and services.

The DOC IT Portfolio Management Policy expanded NOAALink's scope to include all IT products and services, including mission and infrastructure. Therefore, with the exception of Personal Computers and accessories that are to be acquired through the DOC Personal Computer portal, all IT procurements over \$3,000 must go through NOAALink. A majority of product and product related services are purchased through General Services Administration (GSA) or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) contract, or purchased through the

open market. There are also ten Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity contracts (core contracts) in place for the efficient procurement of services through firm fixed-price or time and materials/labor hour type task orders. These core contracts are divided into two pools, under which task orders are competed. One pool is made up five of small businesses and the other of five 8(a) small businesses. More detail about the competition procedures is provided in the Processes portion of this Guide. Another resource for NOAALink is the Strategic Management Services (SMS) contract. The contract provides support services to NOAALink in three areas: Decision Support, Enterprise Architecture Services and Project Management Services.

As intended when NOAALink was established, the program is transitioning through changes in the role of the NOAALink Program Office and the Strategic Sourcing Acquisition Division. The two offices supporting the program now focus on IT procurement oversight and management, strategic and project support for enterprise-level NOAA initiatives, and key DOC initiatives. Such initiatives began with the award of the core contracts, and will continue with the addition of similar contracts, and the addition of Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs). The goal of establishing these tools is for efficient purchasing of IT products and product related services. As a result of the change in program focus, select local Acquisition Division staff members and field delegates will have authority to process some of the NOAALink acquisitions for the customers they currently serve.

## **AUTHORITIES**

The following legislation, regulations and other communications culminate in the authority for NOAALink and centralized management of Information Technology procurements:

February 10, 1996, *Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996*

February 6, 2007, *Department Organization Order 15-23, Functions and Organization of the Office of the Chief Information Officer*

March 2, 2011, Memorandum, *Mandatory Use of NOAALink Program and Contracts for Information Technology Products and Services*

August 8, 2011, OMB Memorandum M-11-29, *Chief Information Officer Authorities*

September 2011, GAO Report GAO-11-634, *Federal Chief Information Officers: Opportunities Exist to Improve Role in Information Technology Management*

February 28, 2012, GAO Report GAO-12-342SP, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*

March 30, 2012, OMB Memorandum M-12-10, *Implementing PortfolioStat*

August 29, 2012, *Mandatory NOAA CIO Approval for All Information Technology Products and Services*

October 18, 2012, Acquisition Alert 13-01, *Implementation of Mandatory NOAA Chief Information Officer (CIO) Approval for All Information Technology Products and Services*

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### NOAALink Program Office

The NOAALink Program Office (NPO) is made up of a program manager and support staff, including the Contracting Officer Representatives for core contract task orders. The Office provides technical and administrative support for the IT needs of NOAA and NOAA partners. NPO is the first contact point for project needs, and to begin the procurement process. Although procurements are processed by all Acquisition Divisions and Field Delegates, NPO works closely with all of AGO for early planning. NPO also leads efforts to consolidate similar requirements and facilitate enterprise initiatives. Historical data about IT purchases is relied on to identify where NOAA can strategically gather together buying power and streamline purchases. Advanced Planning and Strategy Support is another area where NPO assists customers. Regular coordination with Line and Staff Office NOAALink Liaisons, and monitoring the Forecasting and Advanced Acquisition Planning System (FAAPS) database allows the NPO to anticipate IT needs and plan strategically as far in advance as possible.

In accordance with Acquisition Alert 13-01, entitled *Implementation of Mandatory NOAA Chief Information Officer (CIO) Approval for All Information Technology Products and Services*, NPO coordinates and provides approval of all Purchase Requests (PRs) exceeding the micro-purchase threshold of \$3,000. At the end of the approval process, NPO will direct Requisitioners to submit PRs to appropriate Acquisition Division or Field Delegate for processing. The NPO staff also provides support for the core contracts, which includes the surveillance of task orders and Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) for all task orders. NPO also focuses on providing streamlined and consistent acquisitions. The focus is accomplished through guidance on the development of requirements and standard acquisition processes for documenting and conducting IT procurements.

### Strategic Sourcing Acquisition Division

The Strategic Sourcing Acquisition Division (SSAD) is responsible for implementing enterprise solution procurements and providing acquisition support for NOAALink. Through Fiscal Year 2012 the SSAD role included making all IT purchases over \$3,000, except for those appropriate for the DOC PC Portal. The Division will continue to

administer existing enterprise contracts, actions under those contracts awarded thus far, and any non-core actions awarded previously. The Division will also put in place new tools for streamlining the procurement process. This streamlining includes the core contracts for services, planned BPAs and additional tools for purchasing products. Future additions to the pools of contractors will include more core contracts for services, and other tools identified as enterprise solutions.

As the contracting office of record for the core contracts, SSAD will provide oversight of the contracts to ensure compliance with contract terms. SSAD will also work with the Policy and Oversight Division (POD) to accomplish audit requirements for orders placed under the NOAALink Procurement Authority, to ensure their regulatory and fiduciary responsibilities are met.

SSAD will continue to make IT purchases of products and services, but will not be executing every transaction. When the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has IT procurement needs, or determines that a project is of special interest, it will be processed and administered by SSAD. These special interest projects can be of any type or dollar amount, and the decision to direct special projects to SSAD will be made in conjunction with NPO and the Chief Information Officer (CIO).

SSAD will closely monitor the final close out of all core contract task orders. Additional details about this close out process are provided in the Processes portion of this Guide. SSAD will continue coordinating with line and staff office Acquisition Liaisons to ensure that the NOAALink acquisition workload is properly managed.

SSAD will continue communication with Staff and Line Office CIOs regarding advanced planning of IT procurements. Local Acquisition Division leadership will be invited to these periodic planning sessions to ensure continuity for the customers and that workload management is accomplished as far in advance as practical.

### Local Acquisition Divisions

The Local Acquisition Divisions, to include Division leadership and Contracting Officers (COs), will continue serving their existing customers, with the NOAALink Procurement Authority available to them. The Divisions shall make available warranted procurement professionals to receive the NOAALink training and to execute procurements. The Divisions will manage NOAALink procurements as they would any other procurement - by using all the acquisition tools available in accordance with AGO direction, and the NOAALink specific acquisition tools.

Assignment of NOAALink PRs within the Divisions will be managed as part of the existing workload management procedures, ensuring that assignments are made to those warranted COs with written NOAALink Procurement Authority. Additionally, advanced planning coordination with Staff and Line Office CIOs is done periodically by NPO and SSAD. Local Acquisition Division leadership will be invited to participate in the planning sessions.

The Local Acquisition Divisions are partners with SSAD in ensuring that customer needs are met and that NOAA's mission can be accomplished successfully. Division staff members and leadership are invited to provide feedback to SSAD regarding successful execution of responsibilities related to NOAALink procurements. Feedback includes such topics as the need for more tools, complying with NOAALink-specific processes and communicating strengths and weaknesses of the program. Divisions will also be advocates of NOAALink, as they will be relied on to make their staffs and NOAALink continued successes.

#### NOAALink Procurement Authority

NOAALink Procurement Authority will be given in writing to specific individuals in the following Staffs and Local Acquisition Divisions:

Eastern Acquisition Division (EAD),  
Western Acquisition Division (WAD),  
National Capital Acquisition Division (NCAD), and  
Field Delegates

The written authority will be a letter, signed by the NOAALink Lead CO or the SSAD Director, if the Lead CO is absent. The letters will be issued to individuals after they complete NOAALink Procurement Authority training. The training will be sponsored by SSAD, and schedule of training sessions will be available on the AGO NOAALink website. Training will include information about standards that will allow consistency in issuing and administering core contract task orders, use of templates, communication and coordination with NPO and SSAD, and long term strategies of NOAALink. The training will be worth one (1) Continuous Learning Point (CPL) unless otherwise noted.

Dollar thresholds for awarding NOAALink procurement are defined by the FAC-C warrants possessed by Acquisition Division staff members. The Authority is issued to individuals within the Acquisition Divisions. Individuals executing actions for NOAALink are to comply with all Acquisition Regulations and directions specific to NOAALink.

### Contracting Officer Representatives

Contracting Officer Representative (COR) support for all core contract task orders is provided by NPO. CORs are assigned after a determination is made as to which core contractor pool will be solicited, since CORs are assigned based on Contractor pool. A separate document developed jointly by NPO and SSAD will provide further detail about the roles of CORs and Task Managers, whose roles and responsibilities are detailed below, for core contract task orders. COR support, for procurements other than task orders under the core contracts, will be provided by the requesting Staff or Line Office.

### Task Manager

A Task Manager (TM) will be provided by the requisitioning office for all core contract task orders. The TM shall be assigned during the pre-award process and be the primary customer representative prior to award. The TM will also have a role in contract administration. The TM shall maintain communications with AGO, Program Manager of NPO and the COR. The TM will be expected to assemble the PR package and schedule Review Board presentations if needed, as well as assemble and chair the Technical Evaluation Committee. TMs will need to comply with Commerce Acquisition Manual requirements regarding FAC-COR qualifications to serve in the TM role. A separate document developed jointly by NPO and SSAD will provide further detail about the roles of CORs and TMs for core contract task orders.

## **PROCESSES**

### Workload Assignments

Procurement actions are reviewed and approved by NPO after being routed to them by Requisitioners. The routing to NPO should occur at least five work days prior to any applicable End Of Year Cutoff Dates established by AGO.

When an approved PR is received by the Requisitioner from NPO there will be direction in the Notes section of the PR, in C.Request, regarding submission of the action for processing. The note will direct the Requisitioner to submit it to SSAD, their Local Acquisition Division or a Field Delegate. The Notes will also be visible in C.Award.

The NOAALink Worksheet includes for Requisitioners a chance to identify whether a Field Delegate will be completing an action.

- If there is a Field Delegate with NOAALink Procurement Authority whose warrant qualifies them to process the action, coordination will need to occur with the Staff or Line Office Acquisition Liaison *prior* to submitting the Requisition to NPO for review.
- If processing by a Field Delegate is determined after NPO approval, then additional coordination will need to be done to ensure the accounting codes are corrected.

## Fee

As a fee-for-service program, NOAALink collects a 3% fee based on the obligated amount of each contract action. The fee covers program costs so that all NOAA, DOC, and IT customers across the organization realize the following benefits:

- Acquisition savings through consolidations and contractor competition
- Enterprise consolidations of services and products that simplify the acquisition process
- Procurement visibility that enables better planning and execution, eliminates duplication, gains economies of scale, and enforces enterprise architecture and standards
- Streamlined and consistent acquisitions through guidance on the development of requirements and standard acquisition processes for documenting and conducting IT procurements
- Post-award contract management for timely payment of invoices, enforcement of acceptable contractor performance, and past performance feedback

The fee will be collected on all actions processed by SSAD or a Local Acquisition Division. No fee will be collected for actions processed by Field Delegates. NOAALink actions accomplished by Field Delegates will be monitored routinely as part of existing audit processes to ensure that requirements are not split. Splitting requirements and the resulting transactions are in violation of Federal Acquisition Regulations and inconsistent with the efficiencies expected from NOAALink.

## Oversight

NOAALink program oversight of procurements will be accomplished by SSAD in four ways:

1. Semi-annual Customer Service visits by SSAD leadership to Local Acquisition Divisions. The purpose of the visits is to provide support to customers at a strategic level and ensure NOAALink tools, processes and guidelines are effective and functional.
2. Periodic 'mail in' compliance reviews of files by selecting an appropriate sampling for each individual using the NOAALink Procurement Authority.
3. Coordinate with the POD to review activities, in conjunction with existing Acquisition Management Reviews (AMRs) and existing Field Delegate oversight.
4. Periodic review of data reports, such as Obligations, Work in Progress and Accounting Codes.

## Instructions for Requisitioners

The process for Requisitioners will change little with the expanded availability of NOAALink Procurement Authority. The biggest change will be after the PR is approved by NPO, as noted above in Workload Assignments. As a reminder, here are the steps for submitting a requisition to NOAALink (NLK):

The Requisitioner needs to complete a NOAALink Worksheet located at <http://www.nlkreqs.com/WorksheetParams.aspx>. Once the entry is complete, the system will generate a PDF of the NOAALink Worksheet. Please note that if an action will be processed by a Field Delegate the Field Delegate box needs to be checked.

The requisition is then completed by the Requisitioner in C.Request, with the NOAALink Worksheet and other required supporting documents attached. See NOAA Acquisition Package Checklist found at:

[http://www.ago.noaa.gov/acquisition/docs/noaa\\_acq\\_package\\_checklist\\_4-4-11.pdf](http://www.ago.noaa.gov/acquisition/docs/noaa_acq_package_checklist_4-4-11.pdf)

- For products and product related service procurements, remember to select a COR code when completing your requisition in C.Request. Make sure your selection is included on the “Administration” tab in the “Recommended COR” field. For services expected to be task orders under the Core contracts, please check the Electronic Distribution Instructions on the AGO NOAALink website and GoogleDocs NOAALink Procurement Process Folder for the appropriate COR.
- Note that the Object Class code must be NOAALink specific, which requires that you add 11 as the last two digits to your Object Class. If The Field Delegate box is checked in the NOAALink Worksheet the 11 would not be used, since the NOAALink Fee will not be collected. Your standard code should be used.

Route your submission to NPO for approval by adding NPO as a reviewer to your requisition (not NLK). Please note, although the number and nature of approvers may vary depending on your particular Line/Staff Office's procedures, as a general rule your requisition should be routed to NPO for approval before your designated Fund Certifier and your office's Final Approval Official.

NPO will review the C.Request and note on the Worksheet whether the NOAA Office of the CIO considers the requirement to be within the scope of the NOAALink Program and an approved IT investment. The NOAALink Worksheet will document the recommendation of the NOAA OCIO. The final determination of scope and acquisition strategy will be made by the CO.

Once all of the reviews have been completed, the Requisitioner will usually be directed to submit the requisition to the regular servicing Acquisition Division office for processing. If the project is identified for processing by SSAD, the Requisitioner will be directed to submit to NLK. If the project is identified as going to a Field Delegate, then the note will reflect it.

Statements similar to the following will be included in the approved PR:

- If designated to be processed by the local acquisition office: *“Submit approved PR to your local acquisition office to be completed by a Contracting Officer holding NOAALink Procurement Authority.”*
- If designated to be processed by a Field Delegate: *“Submit approved PR to the appropriate Field Delegate holding NOAALink Procurement Authority.”*
- If designated for processing by SSAD: *“Submit to NLK for processing.”*

#### Instructions for Acquisition Division Staffs and Field Delegates

Participate in NOAALink Procurement Authority training and receive a written letter of authority prior to processing any NOAALink awards.

The Procurement Administrative Lead Time (PALT) noted in the NOAA Acquisition Manual for Simplified Acquisitions and Negotiated Competitive Procurements apply to NOAALink Acquisitions. For Core Contract Task Orders exceeding \$10 million the PALT for “Negotiated Competitive \$100,000 to \$10,000,000” is typically relied on. PALT is understood to begin when a completed PR is received by the acquisition office or Field Delegate.

Review the routing for the requisition to verify that the action has been reviewed by NPO prior to being submitted to AGO. Print a copy of the routing information to document the file.

Review the PR to assure that the NOAALink Worksheet has been reviewed and approved by the NPO. Specifically, an approved NOAALink Worksheet has an approver name and date filled in at the bottom. Include a copy of the approved NOAALink Worksheet in the contract file.

All supporting documents must be attached to the PR in C.Request / C.Award system.

The NOAALink fee is assessed by the NOAA Finance Office based on the accounting coding embedded in the procurement request. Approval by NPO includes review of the coding, but confirmation by the CO prior to award is expected. Specifically, the Object Class of the accounting needs to end in 11.

For example, in C.Award the following breakdown of a NOAALink accounting code is provided for 141129WGL7TJ0000020901020003071000100000000**26180011**000000. As you can see, the Object class ends in 11:

Bureau Code (2):	14
Fiscal Year (2):	11
Project (7):	29WGL7T
Task (3):	J00
Fund (4):	0002
Program (9):	090102000
Organization (16):	3071000100000000
<b>Object Class (8):</b>	<b>26180011</b>
User Defined (6):	000000

The amount of the Independent Government Estimate and the funds certified under the PR should be only for the amount of the product or services acquired plus Government Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) fee where appropriate (i.e. National Aeronautical and Space Administration Solutions for Enterprise-wide Procurement (NASA SEWP) fee). The amount of the Independent Government Estimate and resulting award must not include the NOAALink fee.

Neither the procurement request nor the resulting award should include a separate line item for the NOAALink fee. NPO deletes any Contract Line Item Numbers (CLINs) associated with the Fee prior to approving the NOAALink Worksheet.

All PRs, including fully funded, zero dollar, replacement, administrative, supplemental, and funding, must be routed through NPO in C.Request prior to being submitted to the servicing acquisition office.

Solicitations and Awards must include the assigned activity code in the C.Award system. Coding is assigned as follows:

<i>Code</i>	<i>User</i>
BG	Western Acquisition Division
EG	Eastern Acquisition Division
FC	National Capital Acquisition Division
ST	Strategic Sourcing Acquisition Division

WF	Field Delegates using the Western Finance Division
GF	Field Delegates using the Eastern Finance Division

For example, a solicitation being issued by the Western Acquisition Division for National Marine Fisheries would code the solicitation as BG133F-13-RP-00XX.

If the award was made as a task order under the Core Contract with 2020 LLC, the order number would be DG133W-10-CQ-0041/T00XX.

If the action was awarded outside the Core Contracts as a contract for services the award number would be BG133F-13-CN-00XX.

If the action is a product purchase processed by a National Marine Fisheries Field Delegate who uses the Western Finance Division:

The solicitation number would look similar to: WF133F-13-RQ-00XX.

The award number would look like: WF133F-13-SE-00XX.

### Instructions for Purchase of Products

Determine the most appropriate acquisition strategy for the product requirement. The core contracts are generally considered suitable for the acquisition of services not related to products.

Ensure that all submitted documents are properly completed in accordance with established procedures and policies prior to processing.

Use of the templates for a Statement of Need and Brand Name Justification, which are available at: [http://www.ago.noaa.gov/acquisition/noaa-link/07\\_noaalink.html](http://www.ago.noaa.gov/acquisition/noaa-link/07_noaalink.html), or the GoogleDocs NOAALink Procurement Process Folder, is suggested if customers need assistance in fulfilling the PR package requirements. Additional direction regarding use of the templates is included within the documents.

Review the PR and contact the Requisitioner with an inventory of missing/incomplete items and instructions for completion. PRs shall be returned within two business days if no reasonable action is taken by the Requisitioner.

COR functions are performed by the requesting line office. Ensure that contact information for the certified COR responsible for technical support, delivery and invoicing questions is provided on the final award.

Ensure compliance with Procurement Memoranda (PM) 2012-05, entitled First

Consideration to use FedBid Reverse Auction Service, and document the file if FedBid is not utilized.

For recurring maintenance services on Products, include options when appropriate and in collaboration with the Requisitioner.

### Instructions for Purchasing Services

Although the full range of acquisition strategies represented in the Federal Acquisition Regulation are available for your use to purchase services under the NOAALink program, first consideration must be given to the core contracts.

For purchases of services exceeding \$150,000 that are to be procured outside the core contracts the CO of record will need to support the decision. The CO needs to provide documentation supporting the decision in the form of a memorandum to file, completed with the signature of the NOAALink Lead CO, or SSAD Director, denoting concurrence on the decision. The CIO and AGO Director are held accountable for maximizing the use of enterprise solutions under the NOAALink Program. Accounting for IT services procured outside the core contracts is one area of accountability, thus the need for concurrence above the \$150,000 level.

Purchase of services for SMS must be accomplished by SSAD to ensure firewalls and no conflict of interest is created with non-SMS contractors. If there are any questions whether a requirement includes SMS, please coordinate with SSAD immediately. Further detail about what is considered SMS can be found on the NOAALink website at: [http://www.cio.noaa.gov/NOAALink/naalink\\_service\\_areas.html](http://www.cio.noaa.gov/NOAALink/naalink_service_areas.html).

### Instructions for Issuing Core Contract Task Orders

The core contracts are divided into two contractor pools - five in the 8(a) pool and five in the small business pool. Requirements cannot be competed among all the core contractors, only a single pool. Additionally, elements of the process used for Task Order Proposal Requests (TOPRs) has been refined and coordinated with the core contractors. The process standards include evaluation factors, proposal size, proposal preparation time, pricing templates, evaluation ratings and debriefings. Those processes are reflected in templates relied on for the TOPRs.

Templates, are available for the following elements of the task order procurement process, and can be found in the GoogleDocs folder to which all NOAALink Procurement Authority Holders are given access, and on the NOAALink AGO website at: [http://www.ago.noaa.gov/acquisition/noaa-link/07\\_noalink.html](http://www.ago.noaa.gov/acquisition/noaa-link/07_noalink.html).

The content of the documents can be altered to appropriately fit the size and nature of individual actions, but content of the templates is set up in a way that provides consistency

in the use of established standards. The standards which are expected to remain consistent for all task orders include

1. evaluation factors,
2. evaluation ratings,
3. maximum proposal size,
4. electronic TOPR submission, and
5. oral debriefings.

The standards and structure provides consistency and efficiency in issuing task orders. Although more documents and resources are available, the following templates are mandatory for processing core contract task orders:

- Addendum for Instructions to Offerors
- Pricing Template for T&M elements
- Letters to Unsuccessful Offerors
- Simplified Source Selection Plan (under \$10 million)
- Source Selection Plan (over \$10 million)
- Streamlined Acquisition Plan (over \$10 million)
- Debriefings
- Task Order Pre-Award Checklist
- Task Order Modification Checklist
- Electronic Distribution Checklist

Milestone Plans, including concurrence by the customer representative and CO of record, are required for all orders exceeding the Simplified Acquisition Threshold.

All task orders need to be competed within a pool. For each task order a determination must be made as to which vendor pool will be solicited for proposals. For information purposes only a CD-570 needs to be completed in a manner consistent with the course of action chosen.

NOTE: the CD-570 must clearly state “For Information Purposes Only”, since there is no requirement to have it routed through an approval process.

The rules for determining the appropriate pool, as agreed to with the Small Business Administration, are as follows:

1. If the requirement is for repetitive or follow on work most recently performed by an 8(a) firm, then the requirement should be competed among the NOAALink 8(a) Core Contractors;
2. If the requirement is for repetitive or follow on work most recently performed by a small business, then the requirement should be competed among the NOAALink Small Business Core Contractors; and
3. Occasionally a requirement is competed in one pool with no awarded task order resulting from the competition. If this occurs, then consideration should be given to competing the requirement in the other pool before going outside the Core

Contractors. The steps, detailed on page 12 of this guide, would apply for service procurements exceeding \$150,000 outside the Core Contractors.

A ceiling tracking resource will be available on the AGO NOAALink Website and the GoogleDocs NOAALink Procurement Process Folder. It will provide periodic updates of available ceiling for the various core contract pools and how the pool is distributed among the contractors. Additional direction may be provided to Procurement Authority holders when there is a possibility a pool ceiling may be reaching maximum limitations.

The Key Personnel clause is used sparingly under the core contract task orders. Please apply the clause only after careful consideration and for as few positions as possible, to reduce the administrative burden. The task order file needs to be documented with the rationale for using the Clause and framing the limited application.

Copies of all task order solicitations, amendments, awards, and modifications must be submitted to NOAALINK.HELP@NOAA.GOV and AGO.NOAALINK@NOAA.GOV. Copying these e-mail addresses provides NPO and SSAD copies of the documents, which allows for proper contract administration and management.

When evaluating labor rates for time and materials or labor hour type task orders the CO needs to confirm the rates are within the contractual ceiling rates. Each core contract includes hundreds of labor categories and corresponding maximum fully burdened labor rates for each year of the contract. These rates were negotiated and considered reasonable prior to award of the contracts. The rates proposed by the contractors in response to TOPRs can be discounted from the applicable maximum ceiling rates, but the ceiling rates cannot be exceeded.

Close out procedures, in accordance with FAR 4.8 and the Commerce Acquisition Manual (CAM) Part 4, Chapter 3, shall be completed within six months of a task order being physically completed. The six month period applies to orders that are firm fixed-price, time and materials or a hybrid of the two types. If additional time is needed for close out, a request for extension can be made to SSAD prior to the end of the six month period, to include a proposed suspense date.

#### Instructions For Enterprise Solution Procurements (SSAD Only)

When a non-routine requirement is presented and there is no incumbent, or an action represents the consolidation or modification of scope of a previous contract, it is considered a new requirement. These requirements will sometimes be directed to the Eastern, Western or National Capitol Acquisition Divisions, but are typically directed to SSAD by the CIO. Since there are two separate pools within the core contracts, SSAD is

expected to determine which pool will compete for the requirement.

If there is no incumbent contract, or the project is consolidation of or modification of scope to an existing 8(a) or small business contract, the work must go through an 8(a) consideration process before it is offered under the small business core contracts.

Consideration can be established in the form of a Request for Information (RFI) which goes to the 8(a) and small business contractors. Responses are evaluated to determine if the 8(a) contractors show interest and whether competition between at least two capable 8(a) core contractors is expected. Documentation to the file must address the condition at FAR 19.805-1, whether or not there is a reasonable expectation that at least two eligible and responsible 8(a) firms will submit offers and that award can be made at a fair market price.

## ACRONYMS

AGO	Acquisition and Grants Office
AMR	Acquisition Management Review
BOM	Business Operations Manual
BPA	Blanket Purchase Agreement
CAM	Commerce Acquisition Manual
CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CO	Contracting Officer
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
DOC	Department of Commerce
EAD	Eastern Acquisition Division
FAAPS	Forecasting and Advanced Acquisition Planning System
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GWAC	Government-wide Acquisition Contract
IGCE	Independent Government Cost Estimate
IT	Information Technology
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NASA	National Aeronautical and Space Administration
NCAD	National Capital Acquisition Division
NPO	NOAALink Program Management Office
OGC	Office of General Counsel
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PC	Personal Computer
PDF	Portable Document Format
PM	Department of Commerce Procurement Memoranda
POD	NOAA Policy and Oversight Division
PR	Purchase Request/Acquisition Package
RFI	Request for Information
SEWP	Solutions for Enterprise-wide Procurement
SMS	Strategic Management Support
SSAD	Strategic Sourcing Acquisition Division
TM	Task Manager
TOPR	Task Order Proposal Request
WAD	Western Acquisition Division