WRITING PERFORMANCE-BASED REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICE ACQUISITIONS

DAU LUNCH AND LEARN SESSION

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WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- Using the DoD 7-step Services Acquisition Process
- What is a good PWS? How is it put together?
- How can we educate our customers on the writing of a great PWS?
- What are some Job Support Tools that could assist us in drafting a better PWS?
- How much market research should be conducted?
- What are performance standards?
- What are AQLs?
AGENDA

Service Contracts Basics
Service Acquisition References
DoD 7-step Service Acquisition Process
PWS/QASP Structure
Successful PWS Development Tips
Performance Task Statement Example
ARRT Tool
Historical Analysis and Market Research
Writing & Style Guidelines
The acquisition of services addresses a wide variety of requirements, from research and development, advisory services, information technology support, and medical services, to maintaining equipment and facilities.

Services acquisition is not just about awarding a contract; it's also about meeting the performance requirements in order to achieve the performance results that enable an organization to successfully execute its mission.
SERVICE REQUIREMENT

The primary purpose of a service requirement is to perform an identifiable task rather than furnish an end item of supply. This primary purpose directly engages a contractor's time and effort and may be either non-personal or personal.
FAR REQUIREMENTS FOR DESCRIBING AGENCY NEEDS
[FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION (FAR)]

FAR 11.002 – Policy

(a) In fulfilling requirements of 10 U.S.C. 2305(a)(1), 10 U.S.C. 2377, 41 U.S.C. 3306(a), and 41 U.S.C. 3307 agencies shall—

(2) To the maximum extent practicable, ensure that acquisition officials --

(i) State requirements with respect to an acquisition of supplies or services in terms of—

(A) Functions to be performed;
(B) Performance required; or
(C) Essential physical characteristics;

Any of the methods listed above for describing agency requirements to industry would be specified in the contract as a “statement of work”.
FAR REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICES ACQUISITION

[FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION (FAR)]

FAR 37.102(a) Performance-based acquisition (see subpart 37.6) is the preferred method for acquiring services (Public Law 106-398, section 821).

FAR 37.601(b) Performance-based contracts for services shall include—

• (1) A performance work statement (PWS);
• (2) Measurable performance standards (i.e., in terms of quality, timeliness, quantity, etc.) and the method of assessing contractor performance against performance standards; [i.e., in the PWS and QASP]

FAR 37.602(b) – [The PWS] shall, to the maximum extent practicable:

Describe the work in terms of the required results rather than either “how” the work is to be accomplished or the number of hours to be provided.

FAR 2.101

• “Performance-based acquisition (PBA)” means an acquisition structured around the results to be achieved as opposed to the manner by which the work is to be performed.
• “Performance Work Statement (PWS)” means a statement of work for performance-based acquisitions that describes the required results in clear, specific and objective terms with measurable outcomes.
CHALLENGES IN SERVICE ACQUISITIONS

Services acquisition process tends to be more “ad hoc”
- Users’ services requirements frequently indefinite and not performance-oriented
- Insufficient time and resources provided for planning, requirements development, and performance assessment & management

Severe cases of “Cut & Paste-itis”
- Not analyzing what has changed from last contract
- Lack of understanding of the key performance issues and user concerns
- Overly specific “Personnel Qualifications” (i.e., Government staff augmentation)

Difficult to define measurable performance objectives, standards and realistic assessment strategies for services tasks
- Little understanding of the difference between a performance objective and a performance standard
- Few measurable performance objectives
- Task requirements with no performance standards
- Poorly defined contractual performance standards
- Lack of realistic performance assessment strategies
DoD 7-step Services Acquisition Process

1. **Planning Phase**
   - Form the Team
   - Review Current Strategy
   - Market Research
   - Requirements Definition
   - Acquisition Strategy

2. **Execution Phase**
   - Performance Management
   - Execute Strategy

3. **Development Phase**
   - Mission Requirement
   - Mission Results

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- **Form the Team**
- **Review Current Strategy**
- **Market Research**
- **Requirements Definition**
- **Acquisition Strategy**
- **Performance Management**
- **Execute Strategy**
- **Mission Requirement**
- **Mission Results**
THE ACQUISITION TEAM

Program or Project Manager (PM) Individual from the technical community responsible for successfully leading the acquisition team from requirement to results

Contracting Officer (KO) responsible for participation, understanding the requirement and developing the best suited business strategy to successfully support the required results

Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) Individual from the technical community charged with responsibility for observing and documenting contractor performance IAW the QASP.

Customers, Stakeholders, Small Business Office, Budget, Legal, Contractors, etc.
1.0 Introduction

- **Vision** – Short, high level statement. How this will contribute to your organization’s effectiveness, team and stakeholder buy in
- **Mission** – Your organization’s mission and how this requirement relates to the mission
- **Background information** about the requirement and future projections
- **Scope** – High level description of the scale of the requirement in terms of hours of operation, number of equipment, forecast demands,
EXAMPLE 1

1 Introduction

The GPS Control Segment (GCS) sustainment contract is the vehicle the GPS program sustainment organization will use to meet the program directors vision and mission. This contract is a follow on to the GPS II-F effort which expires 31 December 2012. Our organization is chartered to ensure control segment viability through 2017 while the next generation control segment (OCX) effort is developed and fielded. This effort will provide organization and depot maintenance services to the operational unit. It encompasses, but is not limited to, hardware and software, technical documentation, system administration, information assurance, special studies, data collection and anomaly response.

1.1 Mission

Acquire, deliver and sustain reliable GPS and NDS capabilities to America’s warfighters, our allies and civil users.

1.2 Background

The primary mission of the GPS is to provide precise, continuous, all-weather, three-dimensional position, velocity, and time (PVT); to properly equipped air, land, sea, and space based users. Civil applications include intercontinental in-route navigation (sea and air), vehicle monitoring, oceanic and coastal navigation, harbor operations, resource exploration, hydrographic and geophysical surveying, position reporting and monitoring, coordinating search operations and cell phone timing. The GPS satellites secondary payload, the Nuclear Detonation (NUDET) Detection System (NDS), is a source of NUDET data for United States (US) military operations and treaty enforcement.
EXAMPLE 2

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Background

• The Electronic Transportation Acquisition (ETA) system is the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) Single Sign-On (SSO) portal to the transportation community through the use of the Worldwide Web. ETA and the integrated systems are reachable through the Non-Classified Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNet) as well as through an alternative Internet path provided by Defense Information Systems Agency's (DISA) Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). ETA developers will manage and update several small applications such as the Redeployment Inbound Cargo, Ocean Carrier Performance Metrics, Carrier Appointment System (CAS), SDDC Container Inventory Spreadsheets, Sunny Point Calendar, Europe Workshop Briefings, Government Cargo Recovery Effort Program (GOCARE), and the SDDC Ports and Deploying Installations Books.

• All of the above components comprise ETA technical support. Hereafter the SDDC System Response Center (SRC), Defense Information System Agency (DISA) Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) support, Carrier Appointment System (CAS), Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS), Redeployment Inbound Cargo, Ocean Carrier Performance Metrics, SDDC Container Inventory Spreadsheets, Sunny Point Calendar, Europe Workshop Briefings, GOCARE, SDDC Ports and Deploying Installations Books, and the ETA shall be referred to as ETA.
2.0 General Requirements

- These are applicable to the entire PWS and resulting contract
- Common issues such as personal vs non-personal services, security entry requirements, hours of operation, place of performance, invoicing, billing information, etc.
3.0 Performance Requirements

- Organized by High Level Objectives
- Contains the specific performance results and standards required to achieve each HLO result
- Defining a Performance Requirement
  - Result(s)
  - Context
  - Action
  - Standard(s)
    - Timeliness, Quality, Cost
  - Acceptable Quality Level – AQL
  - Incentive/Remedy
PWS STRUCTURE

1. **Vision**
   - Vision: What do we intend on achieving

2. **High Level Objectives**
   - HLOs: High level results or objectives required to achieve the vision

3. **Tasks**
   - Tasks: Required to achieve the HLO.
   - Tasks with specific standards establish contractor performance expectations
PWS STRUCTURE WBS

WBS Level 1: Vision

WBS Level 2: High Level Objectives

WBS Level 3: Tasks
# PWS Structure

Requirements Roadmap Worksheet

**Vision:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Objectives</th>
<th>Inspection and Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Result</td>
<td>E: What will be Inspected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Context</td>
<td>F: How will it be Assessed/Inspected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Action</td>
<td>G: Who is responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Cost, Quality, Timeliness</td>
<td>H: Incentive or Remedy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **High Level Objective**

- **Tasks**

**Alignment**
**PWS STRUCTURE**

**4.0 Special Requirements**
- These concern topics such as transition planning, government furnished equipment or facilities, security, etc.

**5.0 Deliverables**
- This is a summary of all deliverables required by the PWS.
- Deliverables are also contained in each specific performance requirements in section 3.0 of PWS.

**6.0 Related Documents**
- This sections contains references to documents such as drawings, maps, regulations, etc required to perform the PWS.

**Performance Requirements Summary**
- Table of all Tasks and Standards with associated incentives or remedies.
QASP STRUCTURE

1.0/2.0 Vision and Mission should be the same as the PWS
3.0 Purpose – Outlines the objective of the QASP
4.0 Authority – Inspection of Services clause in service contracts
5.0 Roles and Responsibilities
   - Program Manager
   - Contracting Officer
   - COR
   - Other Gov
   - Contractor representatives
   - PM, QC, others
6.0 Performance Requirements and method of Surveillance

QASP for ____
1.0 Vision (from PWS)
2.0 Mission (from PWS)
3.0 Purpose
4.0 Authority
5.0 Roles and Responsibilities
QASP STRUCTURE

QASP for ____
1.0 Vision (from PWS)
2.0 Mission (from PWS)
3.0 Purpose
4.0 Authority
5.0 Roles and Responsibilities
6.0 Performance Requirements and method of Surveillance

6.0 Performance Requirements and method of Surveillance

6.1 Contract Surveillance describes the goal of the surveillance process.
6.2 Surveillance matrix – forms the foundation of the CORs inspection checklist.
Table lists all tasks, standards, AQLs and the method the COR should use to inspect performance.
Cross referenced to PWS.
### QASP development content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Task</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Inspection (Method / Type)</th>
<th>Incentive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards (Timeliness, Cost, Quality)</td>
<td>Result / Objective helps determine what to inspect</td>
<td>Category of Stds help determine How</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor Actions</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Based on contractor Responsibility</td>
<td>Context helps determine who can inspect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vision**

- **What**: Result / Objective helps determine what to inspect.
- **How**: Category of Stds help determine How.
- **Who**: Context helps determine who can inspect.
**WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO LOOK AT TO MEASURE AGAINST THE STANDARD?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Task</th>
<th>Standard / AQL</th>
<th>Inspection (Method / Type)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perform and document initial inspection for newly received vehicles and equipment.</strong></td>
<td>Completed within 72 hours of vehicle and equipment arrival on station. Documentation shall be in accordance with AR 735-5 paragraph xx-xxx</td>
<td>Equipment receipt records vs. documentation submittals Inspection Reports</td>
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</table>
**HOW ARE YOU GOING TO MEASURE IT AGAINST THE STANDARD?**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Random samples to evaluate if inspections where completed within 72 hours of arrival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine if documentation conforms to AR 735-5 paragraph xx-xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### WHO IS GOING TO DO IT?

<table>
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<th>Performance Task</th>
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<th>Inspection (Method / Type)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Trans COR</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY DOCUMENT LINKAGES

- PWS
- IGCE
- QASP
- CPARS Performance Reporting
- Fair and Reasonable Negotiations
- Contract
- CLIN structure
  - Solicitation
  - Technical Eval Plan
SUCCESSFUL PWS DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

The PWS is your **key communication vehicle** with industry and stakeholders

- Strive for clarity in defining results and performance standards
- If you cannot clearly identify requirements, how do you expect industry to know what they are?
- List in descending order of importance in section 3
- Use drafts for industry comment and feedback
- Let the contractors propose the how

**Focus on defining results, not body count**

- Good estimates with past and future projections will help
PITFALLS OF MISUNDERSTANDING A REQUIREMENT

- Long standing legal principle – “Ambiguities will be construed against the drafter”
- Delays the solicitation and award process
- Results in costly claims and performance issues after contract award
- Invest the time up front to get the requirement right and avoid all the scrap and rework after contract award

“The best contract in the world cannot fix a poorly worded under funded requirement”  Brig General Slinkard
SUCCESSFUL PWS DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Conduct a thorough analysis of requirement

- What outcomes or results do stakeholders need?
- Where have problems been on previous acquisitions and WHY?
- What projected changes are anticipated?
- How stable is funding for the requirement?
- How do stakeholders define success?

Involve stakeholders in the development and analysis process to avoid surprises later on

- Understand and capture the results
SUCCESSFUL PWS DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Provide sufficient and realistic Scoping information

• What is Scoping information
  • What does this requirement fully cover, how big is it?
  • Past history and Projected future requirements by volume or occurrences

• Information is vital for contractors to accurately define HOW they will meet the tasks and standards within your requirement.

• Essential in developing your Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE or IGE)
  • If you can’t develop an estimate, how will a contractor?
  • Who develops the IGCE?
SUCCESSFUL PWS DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Ensure the requirements you develop accurately reflect the budget environment facing you

- Don’t write a Cadillac requirement on a Ford budget
- Is your budget in sync with your IGCE?
- Tie each paragraph of the PWS to the IGCE

In depth Market Research can keep help shape your requirement to stay abreast of current commercial practices and technology
The contractor shall perform and document initial inspection for newly received vehicles and equipment. Actions shall be completed within 72 hours of vehicle and equipment arrival on station. Documentation shall be in accordance with AR 735-5 paragraph xx-xxx.
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THE PERFORMANCE TASK

- The contractor shall perform and document initial inspection for newly received vehicles and equipment. Actions shall be completed within 72 hours of vehicle and equipment arrival on station. Documentation shall be in accordance with AR 735-5 paragraph xx-xxx

This is your Performance Task statement
The contractor shall perform and document initial inspection for newly received vehicles and equipment. Actions shall be completed within 72 hours of vehicle and equipment arrival on station. Documentation shall be in accordance with AR 735-5 paragraph xx-xxx.
PWS & QASP ALIGNMENT

Once Roadmap is complete you can populate the core performance section of the PWS and Assessment section of the QASP.

Alignment

Requirements Roadmap Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>AQL</th>
<th>Inspection</th>
<th>Incentive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PWS

High Level Objective 1
1.0
1.1
1.2
1.3

High Level Objective 2
2.0
2.1
2.2
2.3
2.4

Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan

High Level Objective 1
1.0 Objective/Standard Metric Method of Assessment

High Level Objective 2
2.1 Results/Standard Metric Method of Assessment
Acquisition Requirements Roadmap Tool (ARRT)

• Provides an easy step-by-step approach to help you build and organize a Work Breakdown Structure, performance-based Acquisition Requirements, Performance Standards, AQLs, and Assessment Methods

• Generates editable documents from your Acquisition Requirements, based on customizable templates:
  - Performance Work Statement (PWS)
  - Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP)
  - Performance Requirements Summary (PRS)

Access the free ARRT tool and training resources at http://sam.dau.mil/arrt
PLAN: CONDUCT HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Problems

- How well did the service meet the user’s needs?
- What problems have been identified (e.g., by the Users) on the current or previous procurements and why?
- How were such problems or complaints resolved?

As a result:

- Determine what worked and didn’t work
- Are there any differences in what we need now?
- What projected changes are anticipated?
PLAN: REVIEW CURRENT STRATEGY

Define and Analyze User Needs ("Requirements")

- What is the current demand forecast for the service
- Consider what outcomes or results the User wants
- Consider how the User defines success
- List the principal risks that the User and you identify
- How stable is the funding (i.e., the Budget) for the requirement?
  - Pay close attention to the budget when analyzing User requirements
  - Work closely with the User(s) to ensure that the overall scope and individual requirements are **affordable**, given the Budget
PLAN: CONDUCT MARKET RESEARCH

“Market research” means collecting, analyzing and documenting information about capabilities within the market to satisfy agency needs [FAR 2.101]

The extent of market research will vary, depending on such factors as urgency, estimated dollar value, complexity, and past experience. [FAR 10.002(b)(1)]

DoD DSP SD-5, Market Research – Gathering Information About Commercial Products and Services (Jan 2008)

- “Strategic” Market Research (Market Surveillance)
- “Tactical” Market Research (Market Investigation)

Determine what the market conditions were in the past and how market conditions have changed.
Market Research

**Market Research**: we collect market information to enable programs to

- to maximize reliance on the commercial marketplace and
- to benefit from market capabilities, technologies, and competitive forces

**Effective Market Research** is

- Continual
- Proactive
- **Iterative** (revisited and revised over and over)
- Applied throughout the life cycle
## Areas Most Relevant to Services Requirements Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of suppliers in the market and market share</td>
<td>Standards used: governmental, industry, or company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length and extent of warranty coverage and exclusions for equipment maintenance and repair</td>
<td>Identification of multiple levels of the same service (e.g., basic, standard, and premium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance requirements that affect quality</td>
<td>Current labor/other costs, prices, and cost drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery. Geographic coverage (e.g., local, regional); availability of service (e.g. 24/7 or other)</td>
<td>Tasks included in the service; acceptable quality levels (AQLs); ancillary and related services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor factors such as availability and required skills</td>
<td>Customer support (e.g., able to meet sudden changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier capacities needed for a specific acquisition</td>
<td>Training and certification standards of the workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of any new technical developments</td>
<td>Past performance information on potential sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General approaches to delivering the service</td>
<td>Availability of commercial services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past governmental work (Federal, state or local) performed by potential suppliers</td>
<td>Supplier willingness to modify commercial services to meet Government user requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names, size, location, annual sales of potentially capable suppliers providing the service</td>
<td>Contract structure (e.g., use of performance work statements, performance metrics and incentives)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## What Market Info. Might We Find?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Relevant Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number &amp; identity of capable suppliers</td>
<td>Effective supplier incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number &amp; identity of capable small businesses</td>
<td>Customary payment terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost drivers</td>
<td>Intellectual property rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of customarily offered products/services</td>
<td>Typical contract types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current market costs &amp; prices</td>
<td>Contract line item structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation/deflation rates</td>
<td>Contract durations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical evaluation criteria</td>
<td>Customary surveillance methods/frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the marketplace</td>
<td>Typical service &amp; performance levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of the industry</td>
<td>Prospective supplier financial health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power positions of prospective suppliers relative to the buyer</td>
<td>Diminishing manufacturing sources &amp; obsolete parts issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customary terms &amp; conditions</td>
<td>How attractive is the business to suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN: There’s More….</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price volatility</td>
<td>Market discounts or rebates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy conservation/recycling potential</td>
<td>Applicable laws &amp; regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging technologies</td>
<td>Particular suppliers’ performance records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of requirements</td>
<td>Customary profit margins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery lead times</td>
<td>Typical overhead rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of commercial items/services</td>
<td>Existing government contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customary warranty terms</td>
<td>Conflicts of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate supplier performance metrics</td>
<td>Macro/microeconomic indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing logistics &amp; maintenance infrastructure</td>
<td>Recent/likely mergers &amp; acquisitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether a reverse auction would be appropriate</td>
<td>Production rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required buyer financing</td>
<td>Assess supply &amp; demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan: And Still More….</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis</td>
<td>Extent of customary use of performance-based contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government’s leverage in the market sector</td>
<td>Supplier capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>Identify best-in-class suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcontract management issues</td>
<td>Supplier/Provider locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether expected savings will meet thresholds</td>
<td>Supplier/Provider revenue models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor rates</td>
<td>Market share of prospective suppliers/providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimize best value acquisitions through competitive market pressures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During launch of the space shuttle, some insulating foam fell off. While the astronauts were in space, team members’ concerns that the incident could imperil the astronauts’ safety were largely disregarded. Columbia broke up on re-entry in February 2003.

Post-tragedy investigation report:

the team’s “management techniques unknowingly imposed barriers that kept at bay both engineering concerns and dissenting views and ultimately helped create ‘blind spots’ that prevented them from seeing the danger….”
Get Input From Everyone

It’s not enough to assemble a team of experts!

Reach out for everyone’s questions, comments, and perspectives – especially concerns and dissenting views.
Don’t Forget Industry

• Be sure to include INDUSTRY in the review process!

• Ask prospective contractors to review a draft of the RFP and to provide comments/questions on anything they think should be changed or clarified.

• Take industry questions and comments seriously. Try to be as responsive as possible. Remember: the objective is to provide a fair document that industry can respond to effectively.
Different Types Of Work Statements: One Set Of Skills

Writing & Style
8 Guidelines that apply to ALL types of Work Statements
1. FOCUS ON THE AUDIENCE!

• Focus on the intended audience. Both the author and the reader must understand the Work Statement. A variety of personnel from diverse disciplines and backgrounds will read and interpret the Work Statement.

• Offerors will interpret words within the Work Statement to determine the Government’s intent and priorities, to identify potential costs, and to determine anticipated profit - as well as to evaluate their ability to compete with other offerors.
2. WRITING GUIDELINES: ORGANIZATION

• Organize the content in a logical sequence. (Generally, use the Work Breakdown Structure or similar outline as the organizational framework.)

• Limit each paragraph to a single concept or several closely connected concepts.

• Number the task (requirement) paragraphs, to facilitate organization and reference/cross-reference.

• Use bullets sparingly, because they are difficult to reference.

• Provide a table of contents and page numbers. Consider using line numbers, and requiring offerors to line-number their proposals, to facilitate more specific references.
3. WRITING GUIDELINES: SENTENCES

• Write in direct, relatively short sentences. Break up long sentences for readability and clarity. Avoid stringing long lists into sentences.

• Avoid overly complex sentence structures.

• Limit each sentence to a single concept.

• In an early review, delete all unnecessary words from sentences.

• Use active verbs, which express action and generally provide more substantive meaning in fewer words. (Example – Wordy: “Configuration management is an improvement on the current system.” Better: “Configuration management improves the current system.”)
WRITING GUIDELINES: SENTENCES

• Use **adjectives and adverbs sparingly** and only when they add essential meaning.

• Use **parallel structure**. Using a parallel word pattern (grammatical form and phrase length) shows that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. Ensure that all words, phrases, and clauses linked together in a series agree with the subject and verb (ask yourself whether each would work in the sentence if you eliminated the others in the series). *(Example – Avoid: “The Contractor shall install, conduct testing, and inspect all MRAP tires.” Better: “The Contractor shall install, test, and inspect all MRAP tires.”)*
4. WRITING GUIDELINES: NUMBERS

• Except as otherwise specified, spell out numbers under 10, and use the numeral form for numbers 10 and above.

• Spell out a number beginning a sentence.

• Don’t both spell out AND use a numeral to represent one number. Doing so does not add clarity yet creates potential errors. (Example – Avoid: “eight (8)”)

• Always spell out one or zero when used alone, because these numerals are easily mistaken for letters.
WRITING GUIDELINES: NUMBERS

• Represent dimensions, degrees of temperature, percentages, dollars and cents as numerals and symbols. (*Example – Avoid:* “twelve percent” *Better:* “12%”)

• When two numbers are used together to define different attributes, use a written word for one of the numbers. (*Example – Avoid:* “8 55-gallon metal drums” *Better:* “Eight 55-gallon metal drums”)

• **All, any, and either.** Use “all” to mean “each one” of a group (“The Contractor shall change all damaged MRAP tires.”). Use “any” to mean a limited number (or none), in the discretion of the actor (“The Contractor shall change any damaged MRAP tire.”). “Any” is an ambiguous word. Use “either” to mean that the actor must choose between two options (“The Contractor shall either repair or replace all damaged MRAP tires.”).

• **And/or.** Generally, avoid this construction, because it creates ambiguity. (Are both conditions true or is only one condition true?) *(Example – Avoid: “Hawaii and/or Japan” Better: “Hawaii, Japan, or both”)*
“As applicable” or “as necessary.” Avoid these phrases where practicable because they are ambiguous. (*WHO determines whether an action is “applicable” or “necessary?” On what basis? When? How is the determination documented?*)

Instead, state the specific requirements, so that the contractor can comply. If the specifics are unknown, state who will make the applicability or necessity determination, how, and on what basis. (*Example – Avoid: “The Contractor shall replace the MRAP tires as necessary.” *Better: “The Contractor shall inspect the MRAP tires and replace any tire that requires repair.”*)
“As directed” or “as required.” Avoid these phrases where practicable, because they are vague, have no express limitations, and connote personal services. If the specifics are unknown, state who will provide the direction or requirement, and on what basis. (Example – Avoid: “The Contractor shall replace the MRAP tires as directed.” Better: “The Contractor shall replace MRAP tires when the Government directs, based on the Government’s evaluation of tire wear, maintenance schedule, and operational environment.”)
“Assist” or “support.” Generally avoid these words by themselves because they are vague and connote personal services. When using these words, specify what the contractor must do. If you can’t identify all specific performance requirements, identify types or examples of specific performance you require, so as to provide sufficient information regarding the requirement’s nature and scope. Remember to tell the contractor only WHAT performance is required; do not specify HOW the contractor must perform. (Example – Avoid: “Assistance shall be provided for the conduct of logistical support meetings.” Better: “The Contractor shall provide all appropriate logistical support to coordinate meetings including, for example, providing meeting coordination and scheduling; preparing and disseminating invitations, minutes, read-aheads, presentations, schedules, and action items; and tracking and reporting action item status.”)
**WRITING GUIDELINES: SPECIFIC WORDING ISSUES**

**Authorized under.** An action is authorized under the FAR, not by the FAR.

**Contractors, offerors, and vendors.** Use “offerors” to denote RFP respondents – in Sections L and M, for example. Note: Be careful not to use “offeror’s” when “offerors” is appropriate, e.g., “All offeror’s shall….” Use “vendors” to denote respondents to a Request for Quotations (RFQ), because a quotation submitted in response to an RFQ is not a legal “offer” (unlike a proposal submitted in response to an RFP). Use “Contractor” to denote the non-government party to the specific contract resulting from the RFQ or RFP – in the PWS, QASP, and PRS, for example.
e.g. means “for example.” Use “e.g.” to provide an example in instances where readers may not know, or may misinterpret, the subset to which the word refers. (Example: “We will not consider information from any other transaction (e.g., descriptions of previous projects).”) Do not confuse “e.g.” with “i.e.” below. Use the former (e.g.) when what follows is a non-exhaustive, illustrative list of items with the indication that there may be other, other items that are not listed; use the latter (i.e.) as a replacement or exhaustive list.

Engineering and technical services. This phrase encompasses a broad area of expertise. Do not use it without more specific information clarifying the work.
etc. Generally avoid this term, which is vague and ambiguous. Readers may not know, or may misinterpret, the subset to which the word refers. (Example – Avoid: “The Contractor shall test drive the Cougar, Buffalo, M-ATV vehicles etc..” Better: “The Contractor shall test drive the Cougar, Buffalo, M-ATV, and other MRAP vehicles.”)

i.e. means “that is to say” or “specifically.” (Example: “We will evaluate submissions for relevancy (i.e., similarity in scope, magnitude, and complexity to this solicitation).”) When “i.e.” is used, what follows is exhaustive.

“It” or “They.” A single corporation, offeror, vendor, or contractor is “it.” Multiple corporations, offerors, vendors, or contractors are “they.”
WRITING GUIDELINES: SPECIFIC WORDING ISSUES

“May” or “Might.” Use “may” to imply permissive circumstances and “might” to imply uncertain future conditions. (*Example:* “Bad weather might cause unexpected MRAP vehicle delivery delays. The Government may allow the Contractor additional delivery time in such circumstances.”)

Quotation is a noun. (*Example:* “Be sure to submit each quotation by the closing date and time.”) Quote is a verb. (*Example:* “Be sure to quote stepladder prices on the spreadsheet.”)

Responsive. The term “responsive,” as used in the FAR, is only applicable to a FAR Part 14 procurement. (See FAR 14.103-2(d).) In contrast, in a negotiated procurement, such as FAR Part 15, the concept of “responsiveness” is inapplicable. (See e.g., ECI Defense Group, B-400177, July 25, 2008, fn.3.)
WRITING GUIDELINES: SPECIFIC WORDING ISSUES

Shall means the imperative. Use “shall” to state a required action (such as a binding provision in the contractor’s work requirement.) Do not use “will” to identify a task that the contractor is required to perform.

Should means an expected course of action or policy that is to be followed unless inappropriate for a particular circumstance. Avoid using this word in work statements and related acquisition documents.
• Subject matter expert generally is too vague. Best practice in a performance-based acquisition is to focus on contractor performance standards, rather than requiring that contractor employees have specific experience, certificates, or licenses. However, you may expressly require contractor employee subject matter certificates or licenses that are necessary prerequisites to the required performance, subject to certain exceptions and requirements. (See, e.g., FAR 39.104 regarding information technology services.) *(Example: “Each Contractor physician performing this task shall be authorized to practice medicine under the laws of the jurisdiction in which performance takes place.”)*
WRITING GUIDELINES: SPECIFIC WORDING ISSUES

• **Utilize.** “Use” is more direct than “utilize.”

• **Whether or not.** Avoid adding “or not” to “whether.”

• **Will.** Use “will” to refer to the government’s future actions or to describe an action or event expected to take place or exist in the future. Remember that all contractor performance requirements should use “shall.” (*Example – Avoid:* “The Contractor will install the MRAP tires.” *Better:* “The Contractor shall install the MRAP tires. The Government will inspect newly installed tires every Friday.”)
Would is most commonly used to create conditional verb forms. (It also serves as the past form of the verb "will," and it can indicate repetition in the past.) Use “shall” plus a statement of condition, rather than “would,” to denote conditional contractor performance requirements. (Example – Avoid: “The Contractor would reschedule installation of MRAP tires if there’s a storm.” Better: “The Contractor shall reschedule installation of MRAP tires in the event of a storm.”)

Avoid use of slashes, which may be ambiguous. (Example – Avoid: “The Contractor shall install/test the MRAP tires.” Better: “The Contractor shall install and test the MRAP tires.”)
6. WRITING GUIDELINES: PUNCTUATION

Serial Commas (aka “Oxford” commas). Include the final comma in an enumerated series to avoid ambiguities. (Example – Avoid: “The Contractor shall provide separate reports on its performance in logistics, engineering, resourcing and management and labor.” Better: The Contractor shall provide separate reports on its performance in logistics, engineering, resourcing and management, and labor.”) The latter example clarifies that “resourcing and management” is one distinct report.

Because the goal is to write simple, concise sentences, a well-written document should require minimum punctuation. When complicated punctuation is required, consider rewriting the sentence or breaking a long sentence into several sentences.

Commas and periods go inside quotation marks.
WRITING GUIDELINES: PUNCTUATION

Minimize use of dashes. Dashes thrive in confused writing, because it’s easier to stick in dashes than to organize a smoother sentence. (To make a proper dash in Microsoft Word, type the dash line twice, then any letter, then space. Next, delete the random letter you used.)

In general, only capitalize proper nouns, defined terms, the word at the beginning of a sentence, and the word at the beginning of each bulleted list item. Do not capitalize the terms “government,” “contractor,” “vendor,” and “offeror” in general usage, because they are not proper nouns. DO, however, capitalize the terms “the Government” and “the Contractor” in the PWS, Performance Requirements Summary, and QASP when you are referring specifically to the two parties to the subject contract (because they are acting as defined terms).
WRITING GUIDELINES: PUNCTUATION

When creating a numbered or bulleted list, separate the items by semi-colons, not commas. Capitalize each beginning word after a semi-colon. (Keep in mind, a bullet list is not recommended for use in a work statement, because it is difficult to reference.) Example:

1. Thing 1;
2. Thing 2; and
3. Thing 3.

Use two spaces after punctuation marks ending a sentence.
Be complete and explicit. Do not rely on implicit assumptions, unspecified trade practices, or the fact that “we’ve always done it this way.”

Be concise. Redundancy reduces clarity and increases the likelihood of ambiguity and inconsistency.

Use possessives where appropriate – they generally are more concise and direct. *(Example – Avoid: “the gun of the Marine” Better: “the Marine’s gun”)*

Avoid vagueness. Instead, state the requirement precisely and in objective terms. Courts generally construe contract ambiguity against the drafter (the government, in this case).
Use consistent terminology throughout. When referring to a specific item, use the same phrase or word, particularly when referring to technical terms and items.

Use the simplest words possible. Avoid complex words.

As much as possible, avoid technical jargon, legal phrases, and other elaborate phrases.

Always write in active (as opposed to passive) voice. The active voice is clearer, usually shorter, and better for obtaining precision in writing. It also eliminates ambiguity regarding who is responsible for the action. (Example – PASSIVE: “The database shall be upgraded every month.” ACTIVE: “The Contractor shall upgrade the database every month.”)
WRITING GUIDELINES: CONTENT & USAGE

• When using an abbreviation or acronym for the first time, state the complete term followed by the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. Thereafter, use the abbreviation or acronym. Do not start a sentence with an acronym. Generally, only abbreviate if the abbreviation will occur again in the document. Include a glossary, as an attachment, of all abbreviations and acronyms used in the work statement.

• Beware of abbreviations or acronyms that have multiple meanings. (Example: “CO” can mean commanding officer, commissioned officer, change order, contracting officer, etc..)

• Use pronouns cautiously to avoid misunderstandings. Repeat the noun to avoid any misinterpretation.
In documents that are notifications (such as a Combined Synopsis/Solicitation), generally avoid unnecessary phrases such as “Be advised that…” and “Note that…” and “Offerors are on notice that….”

Be careful to use the correct noun form. *Examples:*

- **Singular** – “Each offeror shall….”
- **Plural** – “All offerors shall….”
- **Singular Possessive** – “Our confidence in the offeror’s ability is based on….”
- **Plural Possessive** – “We will analyze all offerors’ technical proposals.”
If you say something will be done (e.g., posted, reviewed, or approved), be sure to say by whom it will be done.

Follow the word “this” with a specific object (noun), in order to precisely identify what “this” is. (Example – Avoid: “This is outdated.” Better: “This database is outdated.”)
Writing Guidelines: Content & Usage

Provide specific information regarding what the contractor is going to achieve, produce, or deliver. This specification of the contractor’s performance result is especially important when using performance verbs such as “contribute,” “develop,” “support,” “assist,” “review,” “evaluate,” and “monitor,” in order to ensure that the government can assess, and hold the contractor responsible for, the contractor’s performance of that requirement. (Example – Avoid: “The Contractor shall review the draft presentation.” Better: “The Contractor shall review the draft presentation and deliver written comments, questions, and recommendations regarding the presentation format, organization, and content.”)
8. WRITING GUIDELINES: MISCELLANEOUS

Eliminate schedule inconsistencies. Various parts of the RFP may include timing requirements, particularly in work requirements and delivery requirements.

Beware of unreasonable or impossible schedule requirements. These hazards can lead to misinterpretation and risk.

Avoid unnecessary comments or nonessential statements. They can cause confusion.

Proofread carefully. Read the entire document from start to finish. Use spell-check and grammar-check. Correct all typographical, spelling, and grammar errors.
WRITING GUIDELINES: MISCELLANEOUS

Make the page format easy to read and annotate. Consider font style, font size, margins, and headings. Use Times New Roman, 12 point font size, one-inch margins.

Follow configuration management best practices, particularly during the drafting stages. Date each draft, and label comments and questions provided during the review process with the reviewer’s name and date. Maintain a master copy of each set of documents and revisions. Consistently use a requirements traceability matrix (or other system) to document changes to requirements.

Use the correct FAR citation format, in accordance with FAR 1.105-2(c). (Example – Incorrect: FAR SubPart 45.4; Correct: FAR subpart 45.4)
Avoid contradictory terms. *(Example: A requirement began: “It is both the offeror’s duty and discretion to….” Which is it? What if your supervisor said, “You have the duty and the discretion to come into work tomorrow?”)*

Avoid including constraints or requirements inadvertently limiting the contractor’s ability to do the work.

Be careful using templates and samples, and tailor language for the current procurement. With respect to the procurement at hand, make sure:

- All “borrowed” language is applicable;
- The language makes sense and adds value; and
- There are no issues the template language ignores.
Because a document or specific language “made it through” a previous review does not mean it is sufficient and appropriate for the current procurement. Circumstances might have changed or the language might have simply escaped scrutiny.
A successful Work Statement writer needs to have:

- Appreciation of the importance of the Work Statement as it pertains to the source selection process, the contract, and success in meeting the user’s requirements;
- An understanding of the objective(s), requirements, constraints, and market;
- The ability and drive to write in organized, clear, specific, and complete terms; and
- The willingness and tenacity to review and revise through multiple drafts to create an excellent document.
SERVICES ACQUISITION LEARNING ASSETS

Foundational Learning

- ACQ165 Defense Acquisition of Services (8 hours online)
- ACQ255 Services Acquisition Management Tools (~20 hours online)
- CLM006 IGCE for Services Acquisition (~3 hours online) (in prep)
- ACQ265 Mission-Focused Services Acquisition (28 hours, case study, classroom)
- CON280 Source Selection & Administration of Services Contracts (76 hours, case study, classroom)
- CON121, 124, & 127 Contract Planning, Execution, & Management (35 total hours of online training)
- CLC222 Contracting Officers Representative (COR) (32 hours online)
- CLE 028 Market Research for Engineers & Technical Personnel (2 hours online)
- CLC011 Contracting for the Rest of Us (2 hours online)
- CLC013 Services Acquisition (3 hours online)
- CLC106 COR with a Mission Focus (8 hours online)
- CLC108 Strategic Sourcing Overview (4.5 hours online)

Performance Learning

Team-based, just-in-time, acquisition-specific facilitated multi-phase workshop

- WSM012 Services Acquisition Workshop (SAW)
  Required for Service Category (S-CAT) I (Army required for SCAT I and II) and
  Strongly recommended S-CAT III and above

ACQ165 Defense Acquisition of Services (8 hours online)
ACQ255 Services Acquisition Management Tools (~20 hours online)
CLM006 IGCE for Services Acquisition (~3 hours online) (in prep)
ACQ265 Mission-Focused Services Acquisition (28 hours, case study, classroom)
CON280 Source Selection & Administration of Services Contracts (76 hours, case study, classroom)
CON121, 124, & 127 Contract Planning, Execution, & Management (35 total hours of online training)
CLC222 Contracting Officers Representative (COR) (32 hours online)
CLE 028 Market Research for Engineers & Technical Personnel (2 hours online)
CLC011 Contracting for the Rest of Us (2 hours online)
CLC013 Services Acquisition (3 hours online)
CLC106 COR with a Mission Focus (8 hours online)
CLC108 Strategic Sourcing Overview (4.5 hours online)

As of FY17

- Contact hours: 15,935
- Average monthly sessions: 4,434
- Average visit duration: 5 min
- Average pages per visit: 4

ACQUISITION REQUIREMENTS ROADMAP TOOL SUITE

- ARRT-RD v4.3 Guided process for developing PWS, QASP and PRS using standard templates
- ARRT-EF v2.3 Set factors and subfactors and relative importance
- ARRT-CE v2.1 and ARRT-PA v2.1

Contact here

Service Acquisition Mall (SAM)
Online, on-demand, services categories-based templates, performance support tools, videos

Contact here

FY14: 42 SAWs (17 SAWs valued >$1B)
FY15: 51 SAWs (15 SAWs valued >$1B)
FY16: 67 SAWs (10 SAWs valued >$1B)
FY17: 41 SAWs (7 SAWs valued >$1B)
FY18: 27 SAWs Scheduled (311 SAWs valued > $1B)

WSC005 Source Selection (2 days-client site)
WSC002 Risk Management (2 days-client site)
WSC008 Developing Performance Requirements for Services Acquisitions (1 day-client site)
WSC009 SOW, SOO, PWS (4 days-client site)
WSC010 SOW, (2 days-client site site)
WSC014 Acquisition Strategy Dev (3.5 days-client site)
WLS001 Performance Based Logistics (3 days-client site)
CONCLUSION

A well-written Performance Work Statement:

• Clearly, unambiguously, and completely identifies the contractor’s obligations

• Facilitates the contractor’s delivery of the required goods and services

• Serves as the standard for determining contractor conformity with contract requirements

• Aids the Government in contract administration and management

• Enhances legal enforceability of the contract in any dispute over performance or obligations
Questions?