

DIRECTIVE

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**Information Technology Procurement Venues
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IT Procurement Venues

OVERVIEW

1. Who should read this policy?

You should read this policy if you are an AMS employee requiring information technology (IT) investments.

2. What is an IT investment?

An IT investment is the allocation of Government resources (e.g., staffing, funds) for electronic automated systems that support the business needs of the Agency.

IT PROCUREMENT VENUES

3. What procurement venues are available to acquire services through the contracting process?

There are several procurement venues available for processing your requirement. Choosing the proper venue is very important. The Information Technology Group (ITG) shall assist the Programs in selecting the best venue for a specific requirement.

Below is a partial list of procurement venues available to ITG. The Program shall make the ITG aware of other procurement venues that they would like to use. The most current list of IT procurement venues will be listed on the AMS ITG Intranet.

Procurement Venue	Types of Contracts Available	Types of Funding Documents Required	Fees	Limited to Qualified Bidders List?	For More Information See Web-Site Or Call
APHIS	Open market, Multiple Award Schedule (MAS)	AD-700 Procurement Request Form	AMS-wide pre-negotiated fees distributed to each Program plus Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) and Federal Supply Service (FSS) fees (if applicable)	No	(301) 734-4703

Procurement Venue	Types of Contracts Available	Types of Funding Documents Required	Fees	Limited to Qualified Bidders List?	For More Information See Web-Site Or Call
USDA	Pre-negotiated contracts for use within USDA	AD-700 Procurement Request Form	--	Yes	hqnet.usda.gov/oppm/usdaconts/index.htm
GSA	Open market, MAS	AD-672 Reimbursement or Advance of Funds Agreement	2 – 10% of acquisition cost	No	www.gsa.gov
NIH Direct	MAS (Image World 2)	AD-672 Reimbursement or Advance of Funds Agreement	1- 2.5% of acquisition cost	Yes	http://nitaac.nih.gov
Department of Commerce	GWAC (COMMITTS)	AD-672 Reimbursement or Advance of Funds Agreement	1 – 2.5% of acquisition cost	Yes	www.commits.doc.gov
Department of Transportation	GWAC (STATUS)	AD-672 Reimbursement or Advance of Funds Agreement	.5 - 3% of acquisition cost	Yes	www.status.dot.gov (202) 366-5777

Note: AMS pays a pre-negotiated fee for APHIS services whether or not an alternative procurement venue is used.

4. Can I select the procurement venue to process my requirement?

Yes, but once the process has started, you must continue to use the same venue. If a modification is made to an existing requirement, the original procurement venue must be used to perform the work requested under the modification.

5. What type of relationship does ITG have with the different venues listed in this Directive?

ITG has established a working relationship with the procurement venues noted in this Directive in order to meet the needs of the Programs. ITG has become knowledgeable about each of the processing requirements. This knowledge is beneficial because the requester can depend on ITG to guide them throughout the process.

6. What does it mean to have a Qualified Bidders List?

In most Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) and Government-Wide Acquisition Contracts (GWAC), procurement venues award contracts to a finite set of vendors based on their predetermined qualifications to perform the tasks contained within the scope of the contract. The vendors on the list then compete for individual task orders or delivery orders within the scope of their contract.

7. What are the differences between a MAS and a GWAC?

A MAS is an Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract available to all Federal agencies world-wide. Agencies place orders directly with the contractor. The middle man has been removed. Federal Supply Schedules (FSS) are examples of this. With GWACs, AMS must place orders with other agencies that have awarded contracts with specific vendors that offer IT services, hardware or software needed by our Agency.

IT PROCUREMENT PROCESS

8. How do I get started?

Contact the Information Technology Group (ITG) as soon as you have identified a need for contracting IT services. A partnership is then created between the Program and ITG. This partnership is essential to establishing and achieving contract objectives because the ITG and the contracting officer are responsible for assisting you to ensure that you meet your project objectives.

9. What are the procedures for the procurement process?

The overall procedures for the procurement process are described below:

- Obtain market research
- Prepare Technology Investment Plans for requirements over \$100,000 and submit for approval
- Seek waiver for approved investments over \$250,000 and submit for approval
- Develop requirements (e.g., Statement of Work (SOW), hardware specifications)
- Prepare funding documents and submit investment for technical approval
- Technically approve investment
- Submit investment to procurement
- Propose acquisition strategy
- Determine final acquisition strategy
- Award and administer contracts

10. May I select my Contracting Officer(CO)?

In most cases, the CO is assigned by their supervisor in accordance with the workload of the procurement office. Procurement offices are often responsible for serving many different Federal organizations.

11. May I select the competitors for my requirement?

If you have a particular vendor that you would like to compete for your requirement, the CO should be informed in order to determine whether the vendor meets the proper requirements. The CO will then make the determination whether to include this vendor in the competition. The CO has the authority to accept or reject the vendor.

12. How does the process differ for each venue chosen?

The process doesn't differ based on the venue chosen. The process may differ depending on the CO assigned to the investment. The CO has a certain degree of flexibility when determining what approach is best for the investment while ensuring that the process adheres to the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

13. What is the estimated processing time for the different venues?

Processing time differs depending on the complexity and magnitude of each requirement. The ITG will work with the procurement venue to estimate the actual processing time when preparing each investment.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

14. What are the roles and responsibilities of each party during the procurement process?

The following table identifies the roles and responsibilities of each party for each procedure in the procurement process:

Legend: (L)ead, (A)ssist

	IT PROCUREMENT PROCESS	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES			
		PROGRAM	ITG	PROCUREMENT	CONTRACTOR
Pre-Award	Obtain market research	L	A	A	
	Provide capability information ONLY, not solution (optional)				L
	Prepare Technology Investment Plans for requirements over \$100,000 and submit for approval	L	A		
	Prepare Departmental waiver for approved investments over \$250,000 and submit for approval	A	L		
	Develop requirements (e.g., SOW, hardware specifications)	L	A		

	IT PROCUREMENT PROCESS	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES			
		PROGRAM	ITG	PROCUREMENT	CONTRACTOR
	Prepare funding documents and submit investment package for technical approval	L			
	Technically approve investment		L		
	Facilitate activity with procurement venue		L		
	Propose acquisition strategy	A	L		
	Determine final acquisition strategy			L	
	Solicit contractors to submit proposal			L	
	Evaluate proposals	L	A	A	
	Provide evaluation summary to procurement	L	A		
	Negotiate with potential offerors			L	
	Recommend best-valued solution for award	L			
	Determine best-valued solution			L	
	Award contract			L	
Post-Award	Ensure the contractor delivers technically acceptable solution in accordance with performance, schedule and cost requirements of contract	L	A		
	Deliver solution				L
	Manage overall contract	A	A	L	

15. What are ITG’s roles and responsibilities in the procurement process?

In summary, the ITG is responsible for ensuring that AMS IT investments are technically sound and compatible with the Agency’s and Department’s technology architecture. Contracting officers and ITG have both separate and mutual responsibilities. The lead responsibility shifts from one to the other during the various stages of the contracting process. During the requirements elicitation phase, the ITG shall assist the Program in the planning process. However, as this phase ends and the solicitation and award phase begins, the lead responsibility shifts to the contracting officer, with ITG acting largely as an advisor to the Program.

16. What is the difference between a Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) and a Contracting Officer Representative (COR)?

A COTR is primarily responsible for managing the technical requirements of the contract and ensuring that the Government receives an equitable return on investment. A COTR is recommended by AMS and designated by the Contracting Officer.

The COR primarily provides oversight and quality assurance support to the COTR to ensure that the contractor is meeting the performance, schedule and cost requirements of the contract. A COR is also recommended by AMS and designated by the Contracting Officer to perform certain contract administration duties.

17. Is ITG available to serve as the COTR and COR on a requirement for the Programs?

Yes, ITG can serve as an alternate COTR for the programs and provide technical assistance. On most requirements, a representative from ITG will serve as a COR.

18. What is the CO's responsibility?

The CO bears the legal responsibility for the contract. The CO alone is authorized to enter into, terminate, or change a contractual commitment on behalf of the Government.

The CO ensures that AMS has properly identified the performance requirements standards and quality assurance. The CO is responsible for ensuring that competitive venues are solicited, evaluated, and selected, and that the prices the Government pays for the services it acquires are reasonable.

19. What is AMS's role in supporting the CO during the pre-solicitation phase?

AMS is responsible for adequately defining program requirements and ensuring that there are performance standards and quality assurance standards in place that minimize the Agency's risk should the contractor fail to deliver. AMS is also responsible for assembling an evaluation team that is knowledgeable about the technical aspects of the acquisition and able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the various proposals.

20. What is AMS's role in supporting the CO during the post-award phase?

AMS is responsible for technically administering the contract and ensuring that the solutions are delivered in accordance with the SOW. ITG will be available to assist the AMS Program during the post-award phase. The AMS Program must alert the ITG and the CO if there is any reason to believe that the contractor is unable to meet the performance, scheduling and cost requirements of the contract.

/s/

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