

Industry Council  
29 April 2009  
Minutes

**Morning Session:**

The third quarterly Industry Council meeting was called to order by Mr. Patrick Hogston, Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC) Source Selection Team.

Ms. Carol Lowman, Acting Director of MICC welcomed everyone and presented the Changes and Organizational Update that included the following:

- a. External Environment
- b. Internal Environment
- c. Industry Council Structure

Mr. Scott Nye provided an update from IPT One, Create Collaborative Acquisition Environment between Government and Industry. Some discussion followed with regard to the Government sharing with industry the number of full time employees and the dollar amount of a current contract. Public information should be made public. Recommendation was that the Source Selection Guide should include the necessity for the KO to notify the incumbent that public information will be made public.

Mr. Hogston and Ms. Kim Wentrcek presented Source Selection briefings that included MICC Source Selection Trends and Focus areas; MICC Source Selection 360 degree initiative; and MATOC/Fair Opportunity Evaluation Process.

- a. Five Focus Areas (STEPS)
  - Standardize processes
  - Training of Board, Contract Specialist, Contracting Officer
  - Engage key players upfront in the process
  - Plan acquisition strategies
  - Simplify
- b. Industry must plan the entire life cycle of a contract. Contracting Officer must take into consideration how the contractor is expected to execute the PWS requirements, and how will the Government oversee this execution.
- c. Industry wants open dialogue for debriefing offerors.
- d. Industry must have good workload data which can be provided during site visits. It is more important that workload data be consistent for all proposals issued by MICC organizations. Recommend including workload data in the PWS or in scenarios.
- e. Copies of the MICC Source Selection Guide will be emailed to those who did not receive it.

INTERACTIVE SESSION  
COMMUNICATIONS WITH INDUSTRY  
ACQUISITION PLANNING, SOLICITATION, AND SOURCE SELECTION  
PROCESSES

**COMMUNICATION WITH INDUSTRY AFTER RELEASE RFP**

QUESTION 1: At what point in the acquisition process should the government engage industry?

1. Is there any guidance to the DOCs about how they entertain Industry? There must be local guidance but any MICC guidance? It seems that it's left up to the contracting officer.
2. Why couldn't the meet and greet happen at site visits/industry day/pre-proposal conferences?

QUESTION 2: During the preliminary planning, what is the best method of gaining insight from industry?

1. Is it reasonable for the contracting officer to have monthly or quarterly teleconferences and have call in from industry? Reference APBI – see how TACOM has structured this. Could we use “Go To Meeting” (Micro-Soft) to do this? No one would have to travel and it would be much easier to logon to a meeting.

QUESTION 3: How can we ensure that we receive substantive feedback from industry without harming an offeror's perceived competitive edge?

1. There appears to be a trend to wall off the final customer from industry. The communication between industry and the end customer can be invaluable to clarifying requirements. There is no overarching policy but the ability to communicate with the end customer is determined at the local Command level. Reference PEO-STRI. Could something be tailored close to this?
2. Sources Sought information – how does it help the KO? What is revealed of the requirement and questions are so fundamental, it's not worth answering.
  - a. The best thing industry can do is help the government analyze the risk (Risk Assessment). Incumbent should be given the time to tell the government what the risks are.
  - b. Send out RFI and tell industry what we need to get done. Let industry tell the government how best to approach the problem.
  - c. Tell industry what we want and ask for solution sets. Industry could provide information regarding contract type, risk, and possible solutions.
  - d. Industry is reluctant to share solutions that will be used in the solicitation.

QUESTION 4: After we engage industry, how can we keep them actively involved during the planning process?

1. The starting point is to provide guidance for reasonable communication with industry.

2. Could a position be created for a full-time Industry Liaison to handle communications with industry?
3. Do we offer one-on-one's for sources sought? Can that be included as part of the sources sought?
4. Bullet #3 – Industry has suggested evaluation criteria and contract type. May get 50 evaluation criteria but out of 50 you may get 6 jewels. Industry gets a clear understanding of the end state.
5. Government needs feedback from industry on what should be fixed price and what should be cost. Check with Mr. Devlin, PM for NSC about how this is done.
6. Have someone (small business contractor) maintain, collect, and update a website for the contracting officer to post information that is accessible to industry. What about AKO? Can we use the SRCC-E site for industry access?
7. What is preliminary planning? What is the government's interpretation of preliminary planning?

#### **SOLICITATION PHASE:**

##### QUESTION 1: Responding to questions by amendment?

1. If industry asks many questions, that indicates poor planning and how effectively industry and government engage in developing the acquisition.
2. Are government contractors restricted from asking the end customer for clarification?
3. Response to questions in 2 or 3 days of the solicitation closing without extending the due date keeps industry from responding with such short notice.
4. Example, the Fort Polk site visit should have come out and been posted to a website. The timing of the site visit is critical for completing proposals. While in the risk assessment stage, plan the site visit.
5. Industry should hear from the customer about workload history, performance expectations. The customer should be at the site visit to explain what they actually need. Industry needs a REAL sense of what is needed. A site visit needs to capture actual needs and open discussion must be followed with an amendment.
6. There is a wide diversity in site visits. Industry was asked to tell MICC if they have had a bad site visit.
  - a. Site visits help possibly identify full time employees and site conditions. If industry is given the number of full time employees and the total task order dollars, some site visits could be cut out.
  - b. Site visits are NOT fun – even though some companies do not want to go, they do. What is needed to give value to the site visits?

A good one was APS III. They shared books, diagrams, PWS. They gave you good documents so you could walk away with something even though you had to turn-in the books. Industry MUST know what the customer's needs are. Fort Irwin had a good one held during training exercises. Everyone was there including the Project Managers. There was a clear explanation of the customer's needs. Site visit is the opportunity for the customer to express specifics – what are their concerns, what is important, what are their expectations. Is there a union industry has to deal with. Industry would like to

have exchanges with customers directly. One-on-One is not allowed at site visits. These should be scheduled for the day after the site visit. It's important to visit a working maintenance shop instead of driving past closed bay doors.

### **PROPOSAL EVALUATION PHASE:**

QUESTION 1: How can we effectively communicate with you during the evaluation phase to keep you abreast of the status (especially when it takes a long time)?

1. Send an email update each week. Contracting officer could use FedBizOpps to issue an update every other week or so. Everyone on the notification list would receive an email notice of an update.
2. Publish milestones or timeline. Changes to milestones should be posted. Include an email address in part of the solicitation that automatically bounces back a response with updates.

QUESTION 2: Do you feel oral presentations are effective and efficient? (Do they add value?)

1. They are expensive, and difficult to prepare for.
2. It depends on the government. Does it help the government? Is it valuable to the government?
3. Could oral presentations be two-way to allow revised proposals immediately afterward?
4. Industry does not like having to prepare both oral proposals and written proposals for the same procurement.
5. Recording of oral discussions – Source Selection Team to look into this with G6.

QUESTION 3: How effective is the Government in disseminating discussion items?

1. Poor. It takes way too long for questions or discussion items to be received. Industry can't respond timely if given 2 or 3 days notification.
2. What about down-selecting? Per industry, it is a great disservice not to notify offerors before award. Early notification saves companies time and money. If a company is down-selected, that frees them up to seek a partnership with successful offerors.
3. Are the government's items for discussions meaningful?
  - a. One industry representative experienced a good round of discussions, then during their debrief learned that they were not successful because there were shortfalls that were not addressed during discussions.

Does providing an offeror's rating at discussions helpful? For example, you are marginal in this area, satisfactory in this area....

Yes – industry wants to know where they stand. Knowing their ratings would tell them where their proposals are weak and what needs to improve.

## AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS/DEBRIEFS

QUESTION 1: What are your impressions of the debriefing process?

1. Should standardize debriefings and exchanges.
2. Need to be careful not to give the appearance that the government is hiding something.

QUESTION 2: What information is most valuable to you in a debrief?

Need to KNOW where proposals came up short. Government may also want to provide constructive criticism to help offerors improve their proposals.

QUESTION 3: What is your preference in the method of debriefing?

Prefer face-to-face or telephonic discussions instead of copies of slides or notes.

Question 4: Who do you think should attend a debriefing and why?

1. The SSA should attend the debriefing with the contracting officer. Government may also want functional experts there – per industry it is important and beneficial.
2. It is very important to industry if government does not say they evaluated what they said they would during their debriefing.
3. Should also schedule a debriefing of the winner.

QUESTION 5: How important of a role does the debrief play in making your determination to protest or not?

1. No definitive responses were noted, but could depend on the quality/information given during the debriefing.

