

# NOAALink User's Quarterly



*Service. Partnership. Commitment.  
Where Business and IT Connect.*

February 2014

With a recently signed fiscal year (FY) 2014 appropriations for the federal government, staff members across NOAA are no doubt ready to move forward with their information technology (IT) priorities.

Please reach out to NOAALink if you have IT requirements on the horizon. We can walk you through the steps required to develop a NOAALink purchase request (PR) and answer questions about what documentation must be included. As you start putting your requirements to paper, loop the NOAALink team in for review; we can help you create a complete Performance Work Statement (PWS), Statement of Objectives (SOO), or Statement of Need (SON). Also, check out the courses in our training program, which cover a variety of topics to help you prepare for your upcoming IT acquisitions.

## GUIDANCE YOU CAN USE

### New NOAALink Training for FY14

We are pleased to announce the NOAALink training program has been expanded to now include two new courses focused on developing your Performance Work Statement (PWS), Statement of Objectives (SOO), Statement of Need (SON), and Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) documents.

For those of you developing acquisition documents and cost estimates, NOAALink's new training covers how to get started identifying your specific needs, what information should and shouldn't be included in your documents, and how to create a PWS, SOO, SON, and IGCE.

NOAALink continues to offer our NOAALink 101 Pre- and Post-Award sessions. NOAALink 101 Pre-Award Training explains the pre-award process for requestors completing a NOAALink request submission. NOAALink 101 Post-Award Training guides Task Managers and their alternate points of contact through their role to monitor technical aspects of the contract and assist in contract administration.

NOAALink is also happy to accommodate group training requests for your office.

To learn more about NOAALink training, sign up for upcoming sessions, or view training materials, please visit the [Training page](#) on the NOAALink website. To arrange customized group or one-on-one training, contact us at [NOAALink.Help@noaa.gov](mailto:NOAALink.Help@noaa.gov).

### Period of Performance Extensions

If you plan to submit a purchase request (PR) extending a task order's period of performance (POP), you need to provide a signed justification for the extension. The justification should also state what type of funding (e.g., one-year, two-year, or no year) will be used to pay for services performed during the extended POP.



# We Roll with the Changes

## NOAALink Worksheet

You've completed and downloaded your NOAALink Worksheet, only to discover an important part of your requirement has changed. Now what do you do?

If you find yourself in the position where you need to make changes to your submitted worksheet, please send a request to [NOAALink.help@noaa.gov](mailto:help@noaa.gov). Do not create a new one; NOAALink will work with you to make the necessary edits and send you a copy of the new worksheet.

## Purchase Requisition in C.Request

Need to make changes to a requisition in C.Request? You can generally make changes directly in the C.Request system. If for any reason a requisition with a Purchase Request (PR) number must be replaced or a supplemental requisition is required however, it will need to be routed through NOAALink again with the original PR number identified. Please state in the notes section of the PR that "this is a replacement for" and add the original PR number, the reason for replacement, and the name of the Contract Specialist working on the requirement. A new worksheet will not be required. The original worksheet will need to be attached to the PR so NPO can replace it with the updated approved copy.

## New Frequently Asked Questions

The NOAALink team has fielded hundreds of questions over the past three years, so it's likely your questions may have already been answered. Here's a sample of new frequently asked questions (FAQs) we've added to our website:

- Q: Please clarify the difference between time and material (T&M) and labor hour contracts.
- A: In terms of NOAALink core contracts, T&M and labor hour contracts are treated the same. NOAALink permits firm-fixed-price (FFP) and T&M (or labor) contract types, and a hybrid of the two where task order awards have both FFP and T&M elements.
- Q: Please explain NOAALink's review process for the acquisition package.
- A: All of the required documents are reviewed to verify they are completed correctly, contain sufficient and accurate information, and are deemed acceptable by the NOAALink Program Office (NPO). NPO will closely review each requisition and all supporting documentation. Acquisition packages for service requirements typically require the most review time. NPO is happy to meet with requisitioners to review, edit, and provide feedback for PWS/SOO/SOW documents. Also, keep in mind, after being reviewed by NPO, an AGO specialist must review the package for adherence to procurement policy and guidelines. AGO will reach out to customers if any edits/additional information is needed.
- Q: Must PRs be rerouted to NPO if accounting codes are changed or funds are added?
- A: Yes, based on the DOC IT Portfolio Management Policy, NPO is required to re-review each requisition whenever there is a change in scope or a change in the accounting.
- Q: If travel is estimated for five trips (for example) and only four occur, is it possible to roll the unused travel funds back into the general labor CLIN?
- A: It is possible, but it depends on whether your funding is One Year, Multi Year or No Year funding. This question can only be accurately addressed on a case-by-case basis. A modification will need to be awarded any time funds are to be moved from one CLIN to another and prior to charging time to those CLINs. Also, travel usually has different accounting codes than the labor portion.

### ACQUISITION CUTOFF DATES

Please keep in mind that FY 2014 acquisition cutoff dates apply to NOAALink requirements. In order to meet the acquisition deadlines, you must route your purchase request (PR) in C.Request to the NOAALink Program Office (NPO) at least five (5) business days prior to the cutoff dates published on the AGO website. The timing of your PR must also be compliant with Procurement Administrative Lead Time (PALT). PALT is set forth in [NOAA Acquisition Handbook Part 7, Exhibit 2](#) and should be considered in the context of the cutoff dates.

## Sole Source, Brand Name, or Both?

To support American taxpayers and achieve the best return-on-investment (ROI) possible, the federal government acquisition process favors competition. The bias toward competitive bidding on service and product requirements drives the kind of information being asked for in the NOAALink requisition process.

In cases where you need to specify a particular vendor or brand of product, justification will be required and supported by market research or specific technical reasons. Please note there is a high standard for sole-source and brand-name justifications as the government strives to maintain a competitive sourcing landscape.

## MEET THE FACES BEHIND NOAALINK

This quarter, meet Cindy Diehl, Contracting Officer Representative (COR), NOAALink Program Office; and Gina Lee, Purchasing Agent, Acquisition and Grants Office.

CORs serve as business communications liaisons between the government and its contractors. Cindy supports NOAALink Level III CORs as they conduct post-award oversight and technical direction for NOAALink core contracts and specific task orders. She expects to receive her Level III COR certification soon. Supporting contracts in both the 8(a) and Small Business core contractor pools, Cindy helps ensure that a contractor's performance meets the standards in the contract and that NOAA and DOC resources are used and managed effectively. In addition, Cindy represents NOAA on Department of Commerce (DOC) and government-wide IT strategic sourcing initiatives such as DOC's PC and Accessories Acquisition Portal and GSA's SmartBUY Large Publisher Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for Microsoft products and services.



Gina works with customers to process their acquisition packages. She develops acquisition plans, determines appropriate contract types, publicizes solicitations, prepares negotiation plans, makes contract awards, and modifies contract terms or schedules. For large acquisitions, Gina creates award recommendation materials for Contracting Officers, prepares contract documents, processes contract modifications, and assists with contract close-out activities. In partnership with customer technical representatives, she develops appropriate evaluation factors and evaluates bids.

Thank you Cindy and Gina for all you do to support the NOAALink Program!

You must include a form CD-492/Justification for Other than Full and Open Competition (JOFOC) if you are requiring a service from one and only one source. A signed letter from the vendor for sole source justification is not considered adequate. A Brand Name Justification (BNJ) is required if you are requesting a product (HW/SW) of a specific brand name. Both situations may apply to your requirement, but if you include brand-name justification information in the JOFOC, a separate brand name justification is NOT required. Both documents must be signed by a government official.

You can find the JOFOC and BNJ forms on the [NOAALink website](#).

## ON THE RADAR

### Enterprise Initiatives

**Cloud** – A NOAA-wide project team is in the market research phase of an enterprise-wide cloud solution project. Cloud Service Providers (CSPs) with Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) certification or holding GSA Authority to Operate (ATO) recently met with the NOAA Project Team to describe respective approaches to integrated IT cloud services. These CSPs concentrated on security and control processes, continuity of operations and redundancy, technical capabilities, and contractual considerations.

**Esri** – The base period of performance for NOAA's Esri Enterprise License Agreement (ELA) is coming to an end. With support from NOAALink, the NOAA GIS Committee is verifying requirements and gathering funding information from Line Offices to exercise the first option year of the contract. Esri products are used for geospatial data creation and analysis, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping activities, and decision-support tool development.

**Red Hat** – Also supported by NOAALink, Line Offices and OCIO are developing their requirements for NOAA's 2014 consolidated acquisition of Red Hat products under a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) established last year. The Red Hat BPA includes operating system platform, virtualization, management, and service-oriented architecture solutions.

## RESOURCES

### Visit our Website

Visit our website for the most up-to-date NOAALink information. FAQs, required documents, and training information are routinely updated for your reference. Access the site via <http://www.cio.noaa.gov/NOAALink/index.html>.

### Email or Call us

If you are unable to find the information you require on our website, or if you need further guidance, please feel free to contact us at [NOAALink.Help@noaa.gov](mailto:NOAALink.Help@noaa.gov) or call us at 301-628-5700.

### Join our Mailing List

To receive important updates on program requirements, required documents, and other guidance, please join our mailing list by sending an email to [NOAALink.Help@noaa.gov](mailto:NOAALink.Help@noaa.gov).