

NOAALink User's Quarterly



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

June 2014

The race for faster, bigger, and more capable technology moves at lightning speed and gets significant attention in the media. In a post on CIO.gov, Navy CIO Terry Halvorsen notes there's a time and place for cutting edge technology. It often costs lots of money and a balance must be struck between available funds and shiny new IT. Halvorsen cites two examples in the Navy illustrating each approach.

Maintaining certain older systems that fully support Navy's mission makes more sense than upgrading them or buying new systems that run the risk of degrading the mission and require large investments. For some systems, Navy and many other government agencies still use COBOL, a programming language developed in 1959, to operate major business functions. Alternatively, Navy now hosts public facing data on Amazon Web Services after a business case analysis determined that moving low-risk data to commercial storage was the most cost-effective storage solution. The investment in a new capability met Navy's operations and security requirements at a price that lowered its costs.

By helping NOAA avoid nearly \$24 million in costs on IT products and services over the past three years, NOAALink has freed up funds for cutting edge technology and helped NOAA's IT dollar go further for maintaining and upgrading existing systems.

ON THE RADAR

Enterprise Initiatives

NOAALink Contract – NOAA will be refreshing the Small Business and Strategic Management Services (SMS) pools and will recompetethe 8(a) pool in the NOAALink Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract. Currently, NOAALink includes a pool of five 8(a) contractors, five small business contractors, and one SMS contractor. The SMS refresh is currently on solicitation. A solicitation is planned for FY14 to enable new small business contractors to join the NOAALink program. The 8(a) recompetethe is planned for FY15.

Esri – NOAA has exercised the first option year on its Enterprise License Agreement (ELA) for Esri products and services. NOAA has also established a new contract for the Esri Enterprise Advantage Program (EEAP). Esri software is used for geospatial data creation and analysis, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping activities, and decision-support tool development.

The Esri ELA provides discounts on the existing Esri GIS perpetual software licenses, unlimited access to any existing or new Esri GSA Category A software, limited access to Esri GSA Category B software, as well as discounts on maintenance, training, and technical support services. The EEAP is an annual subscription which offers a dedicated Esri Technical Advisor that collaboratively works with NOAA staff to develop a strategic technical work plan, as well as provides NOAA access to a combination of consulting services, premium technical support, education services, and other exclusive offerings.

These Esri contracts reduce administrative costs by leveraging economies of scale and greatly improve timelines for acquiring Esri's products and services. For more information, visit the [NOAA GIS Community site](#).

Red Hat – NOAA OCIO Customers took advantage of the NOAALink Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) to fulfill their FY14 Red Hat requirements for operating system platform, virtualization, management, and service-oriented architecture solutions. Consolidated orders from customers in NESDIS, NMFS, NOS, NWS, OAR, and OMAO were awarded under the BPA's streamlined acquisition process at significantly discounted prices.

GUIDANCE YOU CAN USE

NOAALink Process Overview

For those of you with infrequent IT requirements, here's a summary of the NOAALink purchase request (PR) process. You can find templates and instructions to assist with your PR submission on [our website](#).

NOAALink Request Process:

- 1. Complete a NOAALink Worksheet (refer to NOAALink Worksheet Instructions for help)**
 - a. Once your entry is complete, the system will generate a PDF of the NOAALink Worksheet
 - b. If an action will be processed by a Field Delegate the Field Delegate box needs to be checked within the NOAALink Worksheet
- 2. Complete the following required acquisition documents:**
 - a. Statement of Objectives/Performance Work Statement (services) or Statement of Need (products)
 - b. Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) Template
 - i. Use the IGCE to create a best estimate as to what your Task should cost. Independent Market Research is required to support data provide on an IGCE
 - ii. To ensure you are conducting your Market Research accurately, please refer to [AGO's guidance](#)
 - c. IT Security Checklist - This checklist must be completed for all hardware, software and services acquisitions over the micro-purchase threshold
 - d. Section 508 Standards Checklist and Assessment Certification - This checklist must be completed for all hardware, software and services acquisitions over the micro-purchase threshold to determine and certify whether requirements are subject to Section 508
- 3. Complete your requisition in C.Request**
 - a. Attach the NOAALink Worksheet along with your required supporting acquisition documents (SON/PWS, IGCE, IT Security Checklist, & Section 508 Compliance)
 - b. Please note, the Object Class code must be NOAALink specific, which requires that you add 11 as the last two digits to your standard code (i.e. 55-23-00-11), unless the PR is going to be processed by a field delegate
- 4. Route your submission to NPO for approval by adding NPO as a reviewer to your requisition (not NLK)**
- 5. NPO will review your C.Request to determine whether it is in scope, ensure the availability of funding, and conduct the accounting validation; You will be notified of NPO's official scope decision within two to five business days**
- 6. NPO will then approve the PR in C.Request and provide guidance in the comments section to commit and submit your requisition to either SSAD (NLK or ENT), your regularly servicing acquisition office, or a field delegate**
 - a. Field delegates must obtain NOAALink Procurement Authority prior to processing any NOAALink actions
 - b. The written authority will be a letter, signed by the NOAALink Lead CO or the SSAD Director, if the Lead CO is absent and issued to individuals after they complete NOAALink Procurement Authority training
 - c. NOAALink collects a 3% fee based on the obligated amount of each contract action and will continue to collect the fee for action processed by SSAD or regularly servicing acquisition divisions, however no fee will be collected for actions processed by Field Delegates (Please ensure to remove the NOAALink specific object class codes, which require the addition of "11" as the last two digits of your standard, if a PR will be processed by a field delegate, since the NOAALink fee will not be collected)

For additional details on populating a NOAALink Worksheet and entering a C.Request, please refer to the [Quick Reference User Guide](#).

Be Different and Shift Your Contract Timing

For convenience and coordination with funding availability, many NOAA contracts tend to start around the beginning of the fiscal year, leading to a hectic several months for Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO) staff. To avoid the FYQ4 rush of acquisition processing, AGO recommends contracts be constructed on a 'summer cycle' with periods of performance (POPs) running July to June. NOAALink will work with customers to align their IT requirements with this recommendation where possible.

Featured Frequently Asked Questions

You can find these and more NOAALink frequently asked questions (FAQs) on our website:

Q: What are the certification requirements for Task Managers?

A: TM certification requirements are set by the Department of Commerce in the [Commerce Acquisition Manual 1301.670](#). Section 3.2 states “Assistant and Alternate CORs, Task Managers, including Surveillance Personnel shall be appointed in accordance with the same requirements applicable to CORs.” Refer to Section 2.3 for specific training requirements.

Q: What are NOAA’s internal controls for funding approval, certification, and obligation in C.Request?

A: The following roles and responsibilities apply to NOAA staff when approving purchase requests, certifying the availability of funds, and obligating the Government:

Requisitioner – Certifies that the product or service meets a bona-fide need, is in the public interest, and is applicable to the appropriation to be utilized. The Requisitioner shall be organizationally detached from the Funds Certifier and the Contracting or Grants Officer to ensure an independent and unbiased certification.

Funds Certifier – Certifies that sufficient funds are available in an appropriation that can be properly utilized for the product or service to be purchased. The Funds Certifier shall be organizationally detached from the Requisitioner and the Contracting or Grants Officer to ensure an independent and unbiased certification.

Contracting or Grants Officer – Obligates the Government pursuant to a procurement contract, grant, or cooperative agreement. The Contracting or Grants Officer shall be organizationally detached from the Requisitioner and the Funds Certifier to ensure an independent and unbiased certification.

For details, see [Revised Acquisition Alert 13-02](#).

MEET THE FACES BEHIND NOAALINK

This quarter, get to know two new additions to the NOAALink team! Jim Fountain started May 5th as the NOAALink Program Director, and Shirley Karver joined the Acquisition and Grants Office as NOAALink Team Lead on April 7th.

Jim, who joined NOAALink from the Department of the Treasury, manages the overall direction of NOAALink, overseeing all projects within the NOAALink Program Office. He is part of the NOAALink management team and the central point-of-contact (POC) to the Government for all program-wide matters and provides daily oversight and management. By ensuring sound assessments are made within the PO, Jim enables continuous improvement of NOAA’s IT acquisition strategy and guides NOAALink toward its main goal of delivering cost-effective, enterprise-wide IT solutions.



Shirley, who joined NOAA AGO from the Department of Health and Human Services, is part of the acquisition management team. As the acquisition team leader, she is authorized

by the government to publicize procurement opportunities, make contract awards, and modify contract terms or schedules. Prior to and throughout the acquisition process, Shirley provides valuable guidance to the NOAALink PO team and customers concerning unique acquisition needs. She assists customers with acquisition planning, assigns contract specialists to process acquisition packages, tracks the progress of purchase requests, monitors the program’s 8(a) and small business utilization compliance, resolves contractor issues, and coordinates contract closeout functions.

Look Ahead: 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).

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 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.