

NOAALink User's Quarterly



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

March 2016

MEET THE FACES BEHIND NOAALINK

This quarter, meet Mario Lopez, who joined NOAA OCIO as Director of the NOAALink Program Office (NPO) on February 8.

As NPO Director, Mario manages the overall direction of NOAALink, oversees all projects within the NPO, and provides daily oversight and management. He is part of the NOAALink Program management team, which includes representatives from the NOAA Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO), and serves as the central point-of-contact (POC) to the Government for all program-wide matters. By ensuring sound assessments are made within the PO, Mario enables continuous improvement of NOAA's IT acquisition strategy and guides NOAALink toward its main goal of delivering cost-effective, enterprise-wide IT solutions.



Mario's career has included customer service, contract management, business management, and leadership roles in private industry and government, most recently as Acting Chief of Business Systems and Communications and Chief of the Business Management Branch at the Administrative Office of the US Courts. Previously, he held management roles in the Department of Defense (DOD) at Washington Headquarters Services, Battelle, and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Welcome, Mario!

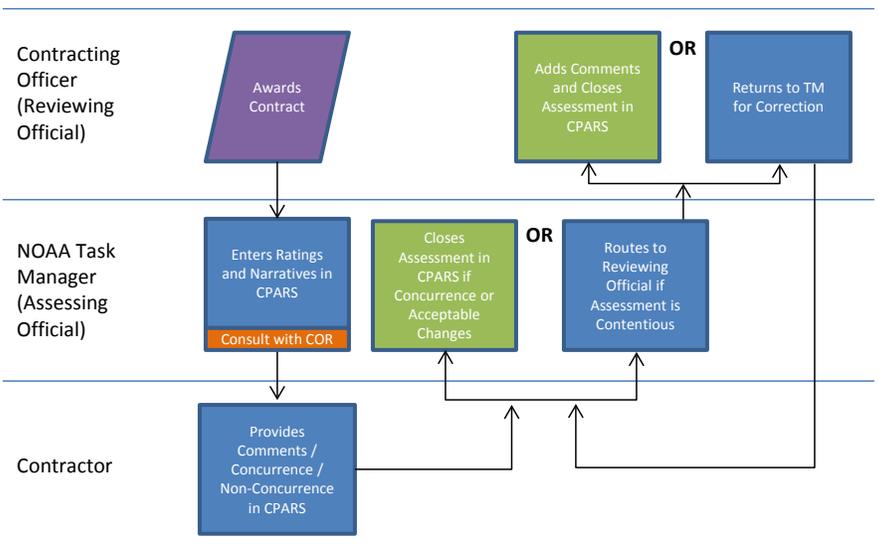
WHAT'S NEW AT NOAALINK

CPARS Process

NOAALink recently clarified the process for adding past performance information for NOAALink core contracts into the federal Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS). As shown in the flow chart below, once a Contracting Officer (CO) awards a task order, an Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO) representative enters contract information to CPARS and grants access to the system, if necessary. When an evaluation is required, the Task Manager (TM) consults with the NOAALink Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), completes the evaluation, and routes it to the contractor representative for review. If the contractor agrees with the assessment or suggests acceptable changes, the TM closes the assessment. If the contractor and TM disagree on the assessment, it is escalated to the CO for review.

Contracting Officers and solicitation evaluation teams use the information available in CPARS to weigh the merits of contractors and help make award decisions for competitive IT acquisitions. CPARS also provides up-to-date

NOAALink CPARS Workflow



documentation of contractors' abilities to meet requirements, motivates improved performance, and facilitates government-contractor communication.

CPARS evaluations are required:

- For task orders greater than \$150,000
- Every 12 months at a minimum
- On exercise of an option period
- If management responsibility changes
- On transfer of contract
- At task order close out or termination

To learn more about the CPARS process for NOAALink core contractors, TMs can contact NOAALink at NOAALink.Help@noaa.gov or at 301-628-5700. Additional resources are also available on the [CPARS website](#).

GUIDANCE YOU CAN USE

New Frequently Asked Questions

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

Q: On Time and Materials (T&M) task orders, why does NOAALink use separate Contract Line Item Numbers (CLINs) for labor and non-labor (including travel, training, etc.)?

A: NOAALink COs and CORs established this practice for task orders awarded under the NOAALink core contracts in order to easily track labor and non-labor portions of the contract. For T&M contracts not awarded under the NOAALink core contracts, the CLIN structure is up to the CO's discretion.

Q: For incrementally funded contracts or task orders, is a contract ceiling established at the time of award?

A: Yes. NOAA is allowed to incrementally fund Labor-Hour and T&M contract actions and establish a ceiling amount for the life of the award. Because ceiling amounts are included, contracts or task orders must also include the NOAA Limitations of Funds on T&M and Labor-Hour Contracts clause, which limits the government's liability to the funded value of the contract action. Firm Fixed Price (FFP) contracts can only be incrementally funded during a continuing resolution (CR).

Q: What is the UNSPSC code and how do I find the code that matches my requirement?

A: The Department of Commerce (DOC) uses the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC), which classifies purchases into more refined detailed categories than were available under the previously used Federal Supply Classification (FSC) codes. The UNSPSC is a commonly used categorization structure that is publicly available and provides DOC with a predefined classification hierarchy structure. The UNSPSC is structured as a four-level hierarchy coded as an eight-digit number and is split into the following levels: Segment, Family, Class, and Commodity.

| Code | Example | Description |
|-----------|-------------|--|
| Segment | 44-00-00-00 | Office Equipment, Accessories and Supplies |
| Family | 44-12-00-00 | Office supplies |
| Class | 44-12-19-00 | Ink and lead refills |
| Commodity | 44-12-19-03 | Pen refills |

You are required to identify line item purchases using the UNSPSC available within C.Request. Use the Lookup icon to search for the appropriate UNSPSC using UNSPSC details or FSC details. Always select codes at the Commodity (or most detailed) level of the UNSPSC.

Do not use <http://www.unspsc.org/> to query for valid UNSPSCs in C.Request. DOC uses a subset of the UNSPSCs available to the public and not all are mapped to FSC codes in C.Request. If you want to suggest a change to a UNSPSC/FSC match or a new code added, complete the following form: <https://docs.google.com/a/noaa.gov/forms/d/161rcj8oCbcWeo01gEOZD0v7XI-2N8CQrjaQ3-wDMAvc/viewform> (requires NOAA email login).

Q: Do participants receive credit for attending NOAALink training sessions?

A: Yes. Participants earn 0.1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) for each session. NOAALink records CEUs in the Commerce Learning Center (CLC) system for each participant. If necessary, CEUs can be converted to Continuous Learning Points (CLPs)/Professional Development Units (PDUs) at the rate of 1 CEU = 10 CLPs/PDUs.

For more about NOAALink training, visit the [Training page](#) on the NOAALink website.

Mythbuster: NOAALink Required Documents

NOAALink requires the following supporting documentation for new IT acquisitions: Performance Work Statement (PWS)/Statement of Objectives (SOO)/Statement of Work (SOW)/Statement of Need (SON), Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE), IT Security Checklist, Section 508 Standards Checklist, and a NOAALink Worksheet. Depending on the particular IT products or services requested, a Brand Name Justification or a Sole Source Justification may also be required. The NOAALink Worksheet is the only addition to the required supporting documents for IT procurements. For more information about supporting documentation for new awards as well as modifications, see the [Required Documents and Approvals table](#) on the NOAALink website.

TODAY'S TOP TIP

Out of Scope? Remove the '11'

If upon review of your acquisition package, NOAALink deems your requirement out of scope, make sure you remove the "11" from the Object Class Code (OCC) in C.Request prior to submitting to AGO. The "11" triggers the NOAALink fee in the accounting system and you will be charged in error. NPO will notify you of its scope decision via the Comment field in C.Request and instruct you to remove the "11" if applicable. Contract Specialists and COs monitor out-of-scope purchase requests (PRs) to verify the "11" is not present, but a quick confirmation on your part prior to submission will prevent any issues. Keep in mind as well that the "11" should not be included in the OCC if you have approval within your Line Office's established procedures for your acquisition to be processed by a field delegate.

ON THE RADAR

Enterprise Initiatives

NOAALink Small Business Refresh and 8(a) Re-compete – Currently, the NOAALink Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract includes a pool of five Small Business contractors and a pool of five 8(a) contractors. NOAA is conducting a refresh of the Small Business pool to enable new contractors to join the NOAALink IDIQ and Phase 2 proposals are in the source selection evaluation process. The evaluation effort will continue through the end of April 2016. In Phase 1, the government evaluated the corporate experience and corporate capabilities of each interested firm and advised them of their viability as a competitor in Phase 2. In Phase 2, interested firms submitted a full proposal. Because the 8(a) pool has reached its contract ceiling, NOAALink will also re-compete that portion of the IDIQ. The 8(a) pool re-compete solicitation is under review by NOAA and DOC management with a target posting in Q3FY2016.

NetApp and Apple – NOAALink has launched initiatives for enterprise acquisition approaches to NetApp and Apple products. These initiatives, which aim to simplify the acquisition process and realize economies of scale across NOAA, are the product of staff input, multiple years of NOAA acquisition data, and deliberate efforts to encourage competition among diverse industry sources. NetApp software, systems, and/or services are utilized by all Line Offices, and Apple desktop and laptop products are deployed by several Line Offices for specialized graphics and research applications. The NOAALink team is working with points of contact in Line and Staff Offices and industry to collect requirements information and conduct market research. Both initiatives are anticipated to result in blanket purchase agreements (BPAs) for consolidation and visibility across NOAA, lower initial cost and Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), and reduced administrative burden.

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.