

NGA Advisory Working Group

Kickoff Meeting Notes Compilation by General Assembly

9/24/2015

The following are extracted topics based on those issues discussed at the NAWG kickoff event.

- Procurement Communication with Industry
- Balancing Acquisition models with respect to Businesses Size
- Contractor/NGA Bilateral Acquisition Workforce Development
- OCI consistency
- Organizational Efficiencies (Portfolios)
- How to get Innovation through contracting system
- Risk adversity - Mitigating Fear Driven Decision Making
- Impacts of security (clearances) on procurement... crossing over clearances on Task Orders
- Clarity and Efficiency in Proposal and Evaluation Process

The NAWG general assembly will address these and the Action Working Teams will edit, hone, etc. More topics may come up while others disappear... same with issues within those topics.

As we realize there may be additional topic and refinements to those above, we will be sending out a survey monkey within the next week. The list above comes from those same topics and issues detailed below (cleaned up after the kickoff meeting)

- **Topic:** Procurement Communication with Industry
 - Marketing update lack of accuracy (both forward and background) e.g. dates: even if NGA doesn't know, we need to know they don't know.
 - award debrief process: timeliness during eval challenges industry
 - Consequence of NGA actions/decisions on industry because it hurts you (NGA): industry wasting time (and dollars, e.g. r&D) posturing toward vague NGA future direction.
 - Transparency of procurement process and communication (not just Transparency of what you want, but also HOW you PICK.)
 - Direct communication between subs and NGA is often restricted by primes; how can NGA discourage this?
 - *What you say and what you do**... case studies (use of the ACE highside ARC, yet you want unclassified – and higher small business participation)
 - Transparency & correctness of information – eventually it leads to decrease in business effectiveness and costs more. Example: Market info not correct leading to missed due dates for resource alignment. When Government publishes a posture and their not sure of the requirements nor dates it leads to confusion and extra costs. Slogan is “resourced for uncertainty”. *Bob Gajda has a white paper on this so we need him to distribute. Recommend we distribute via USGIF e-mail list under our auspices to keep USGIF and us as co-chairs.
- **Topic:** Balancing Acquisition models with respect to Businesses Size
 - (e.g. mids are under-represented)
 - Plight of Midsize / All size Businesses – NGA unable to get around NAICS code and FAR...

- innovative alternatives. Small and agile, or big and intricate...
 - Fed/Midsize business. There are pro's and con's about business size in general so there was a movement to look at business size via NAICs codes. The NAICs codes are driving the issue. This issue again surfaced the risk in acquisition associated with innovation. Reliance on IDIQs for price stifles innovation by not rewarding a shared risk model. Need to consider Kendall's "Better Buying Power" memo driving most of this discussion.
- **TOPIC:** Contractor/NGA Bilateral Acquisition Workforce Development
 - (element of this in the PDTC WG)
 - Lack of understanding by government in how industry invests/funds the development of proposals and FPRs; IR&D,
 - Industry business managers/KOs/pricing officers should BRIEF NGA on their plight/impact, and NGA Contracts/PMOs/etc. BRIEF Industry counterparts...
 - WF Development. The topic ranged from training the next set of employees to working across generations to how to keep the millennials in the workforce. Also discussed certification and what does it mean. How does it help? Millennials are less concerned with clearances because they want to work across the globe. Country boundaries are somewhat of an inhibitor to the next generation. Military-Industrial base will lose more talent to international commercial business due to salaries finally being bigger and the total use of modern technology. Security is not a factor to the next generations, they share everything.
 - Education of Industry and Government for better understanding and model a training program for both sides.
 - Working with Industry: Business 101 - (relate this to IAWG)
 - NGA says it, doesn't do it
 - Fear of impropriety – THIS IS BIG
 - No commonality among contracts and PMs about what can/can't be said (fear).
 - Communication gaps between NGA members laterally and vertically (exec/band 5, etc.)
- **TOPIC/ISSUE:** OCI
 - need a consistent Agency plan. It would be nice to have the Government issue an OCI plan rather than asking each contractor to submit an OCI plan per contract.
 - Why are we sending OCI plans to NGA, we should be responding to them
 - OCI determination requires agency-wide OCI approach... makes it hard to make B/NB decisions now while looking down the road.
- **Issue:** Protest avoidance (accelerate procurement)
 - "NGA is only agency where the real competition doesn't happen until after award"
 - Can a "federation of midsize businesses" FEDMID ameliorate
- **TOPIC:** How to get Innovation through contracting system –
 - Innovation and change are not rewarded – disconnect between industry and gov contracting admin and contract type (doesn't allow for reward).
 - not rewarded,
 - not selecting appropriate contract type...
 - losing best and brightest at the expense of "lowering cost – awarding to lowest price."
 - The protection of IP by preserving (via contract award) the organization that owns it.
- **TOPIC:** *Organizational Efficiencies (Portfolios)*
 - *NGA model is vague with respect to NGA as a development, acquisition, and/or operations.... And the right acquisition model needs to match the NGA self-identity model (dev, acquis, ops).*
 - Policy versus Practice
 - Portfolio and governance maturation is lagging (e.g. requirements not coming together) and industry cannot keep in step. Leadership behind portfolio vs leadership of directorate (clarify this)
 - Portfolios-Maturity of Portfolio Management. It's not working between Dev/Ops/Acq. The conflict between PFM's and Ops being one in the same causes too much inaction. Ops day to

day is a must fund in face of PfM's who also must to fund future efforts. In general the acquisition model does not support the mission, and the mission has 3 parts which are acquisition, operations, and development. The fear generated by acquisition and legal are hampering a higher risk model which in turn inhibits technology advancements.

- **Issue:** Cultural
 - NGA staff morale – Contract officers vs PM, Agile vs Non-Agile
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- **TOPIC :** Risk adversity - Mitigating Fear Driven Decision Making
 - (impacts on procurement and source selection):
 - Case: industry may be more out front on technology and *change* (mutual-ality between NGA contract officer and PMO) - NGA not ready, so industry innovation/forward leaning is not recognized or rewarded.
 - Appetite for change must manifest in how NGA procures/acquires
 - Impacts what industry submits – lack of a SHARED risk model achievable by defining risk to BOTH industry and NGA. *Risk mitigation cost is transferrable to NGA (pricing).*
 - Technical risk (e.g.) and procurement risk (e.g.)
 - Started as S3 session observation of how Operators wanted new stuff but the acquisition model doesn't reward this type of contracting. *Need shared risk model but defining risk and the terms associated with the sharing. Risk aversion at mid-management level is too entrenched to overcome. It's not commensurate with executive speeches. Ops folks rarely read RFPs which is how they will accomplish mission.
 - The communications flow from top to bottom equals transparency. Current contracts types do not reward change of which risk is the driver.
 - Business model impact of risk/fear induced indecision
 - Length of contract award process drives technology obsolescence and the inability for firms to keep talent. This is especially true as you scale from small to mid to large size firms.
 - The length of time you can keep people "on the bench" is shrinking rapidly vis-à-vis pure commercial firms. The impact to the military industrial base is growing exponentially.

- **TOPIC:** Impacts of security (clearances) on procurement... crossing over clearances on Task Orders,
 - Drive toward unclassified – impacts wrt engagement with industry
 - Businesses cannot get access to the ARC, hold clearances, impact small business objectives
 - Security. Kathy Pherson (USGIF Small Business group) and Charlie Allen (INSA) have cross over metrics and study they did with INSA showing the delay switching from Contract to Contract, and even between TO's on the same contracts. Example: Need a new eNom process just to switch TOs on the same agency contract. The practice does not equal policy. *Let's get the study from Kathy and read. If we agree let's endorse if from the USGIF/NAWG perspective and work into NGA presentation. Two outside groups endorsing the study may have an impact.

- **Topic:** Clarity and Efficiency in Proposal and Evaluation Process
 - Fairness and equity in Proposal Evaluation Process
 - Multiple FPRs seem to be excessive, normalizing proposals to "blue green" and then running it like LPTA after that.
 - Issue: BOEs by hours (even without price) in the Tech volume are counter to "best value" because it biases reviewers, it's also not for Agile FFP
 - For long term contracts and multi-award ID/IQs: NGA requires locking down (no adds) to proposed team composition / performance: examine effect of pre-locking in rates (and composition) on winning teams (ACES case study, etc.)

- Everything feels like LPTA... drive rates down as a contractor behavior on proposals is causing Programs at NGA to falter, teams break apart, bait and switch, etc.

General Comments on NAWG:

- Has NGA (and USGIF) legal reviewed this group's activities
- **NOTE: We need to get our hands on the IG report from Nate Copeland. Supposedly the report guts the "T" directorate and NGA in general for acquisition. Need to find out if the report is from the NGA, DoD, or ODNI IG. If outside NGA then this is a real hot potato. We would be wise to align our initial top 3 topics to help with the IG findings and not do further harm.

NAWG Topics for Survey Monkey

- Procurement Communication with Industry
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