

REPORT ON
COMPETITIVE SOURCING COMPETENCIES

~ FINAL ~

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Overview: Focus Group Methodology

Successful application of any competency model hinges on identifying competencies for important job functions and incorporating those competencies into training and career development processes. During December, 2003, approximately twelve (12) subject matter experts participated in a focus group to identify competencies for the following six competitive sourcing roles:

1. Contracting Officer (CO)
2. Competitive Sourcing Official (CSO)
3. Performance Work Statement (PWS) Team Leader
4. Source Selection Authority (SSA)
5. Human Resource Advisor (HRA)
6. Agency Tender Official (ATO)

The focus group employed a significantly truncated methodology for identifying competencies. Prior to the commencement of the focus group, each participant received and reviewed the “straw man” framework outlining the draft responsibilities and competencies for each role. During the focus group, participants discussed each of the roles separately. First, participants generated critical tasks that, taken together, adequately describe the activities essential for effective performance of that role. Discussion of all tasks and elimination of redundancy resulted in a final task list. Second, using the “straw man” materials provided by the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) as well as participants’ expert knowledge of each competitive sourcing role, participants identified professional business and technical competencies. Discussion of all competencies and elimination of redundancy resulted in a final competency list.

Each subsequent section of this report lists the competencies identified for each role. In addition, a series of accompanying appendices contain the critical tasks for each role that served as input into identifying the competencies. Future applications of this material include incorporating competencies into workforce planning and career management relevant to competitive sourcing across the Government.

1. Contracting Officer (CO)

Participants reviewed key responsibilities of the CO's role and generated a list of professional business and technical competencies.

1.1 Role Definition

The following definition from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-76 describes the CO role:

The CO shall (1) be an inherently governmental agency official; (2) comply with both the FAR and this circular; (3) be independent of the ATO, human resource advisor (HRA), and MEO [Most Efficient Organization] team; and (4) be a member of the PWS team.

1.2 Professional Business Competencies

The following professional business competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Professional Business Competencies	Definitions
Attention to Detail	Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.
Teamwork	Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust; fosters commitment; works with others to achieve goals; creates and manages high performing teams; delegates authority and responsibility to increase commitment and achieve collective success; uses his/her leadership capabilities to provide an effective context within which the team can perform successfully.
Writing	Recognizes and uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information in a succinct and organized manner, produces written information that is appropriate for the intended audience.
Math Reasoning	Solves practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical and statistical techniques.

Competitive Sourcing Competencies

Creative Thinking	Uses imagination to develop new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; designs new methods where established methods and procedures are not applicable or are unavailable.
Decision-Making	Makes sound, well informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change; maintains a commitment to being accountable and correcting any mistakes or oversights.
Customer Focus	Balances the interests of clients and readily readjusts priorities to respond to customer demands; acts decisively to promote customer service and the quality of programs and policies.
Oral Communication	Expresses information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; makes clear and convincing presentations, listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues.
Project Management	Develops and maintains a workable plan and manages resources to accomplish the overall goal of the project; plans, manages and follows through to ensure the smooth flow and timely completion of activities that deliver project results; anticipates obstacles or gaps that would impact project success and works to continuously improve the agency's capability to achieve success; displays respect for the agency's mission requirements and remains committed to meeting those requirements.
Influencing/Negotiating	Represents and speaks for the organizational unit and its work to those within and outside the office; makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals and groups; persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; listens effectively and clarifies information; facilitates an open exchange of ideas; works with others towards an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.
Integrity/Honesty	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.
Stress Tolerance	Deals calmly and effectively with high stress situations (for example, tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, and dangerous situations); deals effectively with pressure including using a sense of humor to preserve high morale; maintains focus and intensity and remains persistent, even under adversity.
Flexibility/Adaptability	Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; effectively deals with ambiguity.

1.3 Technical Competencies

The following technical competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Technical Competencies	Definitions
Understanding of Sourcing	Identifies possible sources for the acquisition through effective market research and knowledge of suppliers; limits competition when it is appropriate to the acquisition situation based on business strategies and market environments; determines whether to limit competition to small business concerns or any subset thereof; collects and analyzes relevant market information from Government and non-Government sources.
Understanding of the Marketplace	Collects and analyzes relevant market information from Government and non-Government sources; analyzes and provides business advice on acquisition and procurement requests; reviews and provides business advice in the preparation of requirements documents and related elements of an acquisition package.
Understanding of Competitive Sourcing Regulations	Has a thorough understanding of regulations concerning OMB Circular A-76, collective bargaining, right-of-refusal and conflict-of-interest issues; has understanding of the FAR and related Circulars, with particular specialized knowledge pertaining to FAR 15 and 22; displays a commitment to the spirit and letter of the FAR.
Detailed Evaluation Skills	Receives, safeguards, handles and reads each offer; evaluates acceptability of late offers; identifies and resolves mistakes, and addresses weaknesses and deficiencies appropriately; evaluates offers using the factors contained in the solicitation, including non-price factors if applicable; calculates the evaluated price/cots for each offer and determine price reasonableness; makes competitive range determinations; determines responsiveness if an invitation for bids (IFB) is used; documents contract files appropriately.
Effective Communication of Contract Requirements	Plans for contract administration; conducts a post-award orientation; monitors contractor subcontract management in accordance with prime contract and performance-based requirements; modifies or adjusts a contract when needed; determines whether or not to exercise an available option; utilizes task order contracts, delivery order contracts, and basic ordering agreements.
Understanding of Performance-Based Contracting	Has a comprehensive understanding of performance-based contracting and can apply that knowledge to competitive sourcing activities.

Effective Financial Management	Approves or disapproves the request for an assignment of claims; as appropriate, requires the contractor to provide a bond or other securities to apply toward completing the contract in case the contract is terminated for cause; assures that the contractor receives the appropriate contract financing in accordance with contract financing requirements and relate contract performance; makes decisions related to allowability of contract costs; adjusts the price or fee; determines if cost or pricing data were defective (i.e., not current, accurate, and complete) and appropriate remedies; determines whether to authorize payment against an invoice in full, in part, or not at all; refers indications of fraud or other civil or criminal offenses to responsible officials; determines and recovers debts from contractors; enforces Government and contractor compliance with special contract terms and conditions; determines what pricing information (if any) to require from offerors; considers the adequacy of a firm’s accounting and estimating systems in making contracting decisions; assures that a firm properly discloses its accounting practices when required by Government cost accounting standards (CAS) and that the disclosed practices comply with CAS requirements.
Effective Negotiation Skills and Effective Analytical Skills	Obtains any necessary audit support; establishes pre negotiation positions on price including: the need to cancel and re solicit for price related reasons, the need for communications, the need for cost information, and the need to negotiate; establishes pre negotiation positions related to cost reasonableness and cost realism by analyzing cost and technical data from the offeror and other sources; develops pre-negotiation positions on terms and conditions other than price; determines whether to award without discussions; conducts communications to enhance Government understanding of proposals; allows reasonable interpretation of a proposal or facilitates the Government’s evaluation process; selects offerors/quoters for discussions (i.e., establish the competitive range under FAR Part 15); prepares negotiation strategy; conducts negotiation sessions and documents in the contract file the principal elements of negotiated agreements.
Effective Oral and Written Communication	Selects and implements a method or methods of publicizing the proposed procurements; establishes appropriate subcontracting and make-or buy requirements; conducts oral solicitations as appropriate; prepares written solicitations that include the appropriate provisions and clauses tailored to the requirement and assembles those solicitations in a format appropriate to the acquisition method and market for the required supply or service; responds to inquiries about the solicitation and/or requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act; conducts pre-quote, pre-bid, pre-proposal conferences when appropriate.
Understanding of Government Ethics Rules	Has a comprehensive understanding of federal ethics guidelines and rules and applies that knowledge to all competitive sourcing activities.
Effective Use of Performance Metrics	Can effectively monitor performance (at all levels) by evaluating actual performance processes, workflow requirements, and outputs against pre-determined goals.

2. Competitive Sourcing Official (CSO)

Participants reviewed key responsibilities of the CSO's role and generated a list of professional business and technical competencies.

2.1 Role Definition

The following definition from the OMB Circular No. A-76 describes the CSO role:

[Agencies shall:] Designate, in writing, an assistant secretary or equivalent level official with responsibility for implementing this circular, hereafter referred to as the competitive sourcing official (CSO). Except as otherwise provided by this circular, the CSO may delegate, in writing, specified responsibilities to senior-level officials in the agency or agency components.

2.2 Professional Business Competencies

The following professional business competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Professional Business Competencies	Definitions
Resilience	Displays fortitude to being unpopular and making unpopular decisions.
Decision-Making	Makes sound, well informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change; maintains a commitment to being accountable and correcting any mistakes or oversights.
Competitive Sourcing Focus	Is conscientious and maintains executive-level focus on competitive sourcing priorities when faced with multiple responsibilities.
Problem Solving	Anticipates, identifies and diagnoses problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives; selects from alternative courses of action; makes recommendations, and takes action from developed contingency plans.

Influencing/Negotiating	Represents and speaks for the organizational unit and its work to those within and outside the office; makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals and groups; persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; listens effectively and clarifies information; facilitates an open exchange of ideas; works with others towards an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.
Integrity/Honesty	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.
Strategic Staffing	Assesses current and future A-76 staffing needs based on organizational goals and budget realities; applies merit principles to develop, select, and manage a diverse work force.
Effective Management of Customer Expectations	Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful and treats others with respect; identifies and integrates key issues affecting the organization, including political, economic, social, technological, and administrative factors.
Creative Thinking	Uses imagination to develop new, out-of-the-box insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; designs new methods where established methods and procedures are not applicable or are unavailable.
Risk Analysis and Mitigation	Reviews strategic program plans that assess policy/program feasibility and include realistic short- and long-term goals and objectives; analyzes risks to pursue a recognized benefit or advantage.
Communication	<u>Oral:</u> Expresses information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; makes clear and convincing presentations, attentively listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues. <u>Written:</u> Recognizes and uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information in a succinct and organized manner, produces written information that is appropriate for the intended audience.
Leadership	Inspires, motivates and guides others toward goal accomplishment; empowers people by sharing power and authority; displays a high level of initiative, effort and commitment to public service; formulates effective strategies to balance the interests of external stakeholders and the business of the organization.
Teamwork	Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust; fosters commitment; works with others to achieve goals; creates and/or manages high performing teams; delegates authority and responsibility to increase commitment and achieve collective success; uses his/her leadership capabilities to provide an effective context within which the team can perform successfully.

2.3 Technical Competencies

The following technical competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Technical Competencies	Definitions
Knowledge of Best Business Practices	Reviews “best-in-breed” marketplace practices and uses pertinent information to increase the quality of federal strategic planning.
Executive Level Knowledge of A-76	Maintains an executive level understanding of all elements of the A-76 process; displays a commitment to the spirit and letter of the FAR.
Linkage of Competitive Sourcing to Agency Mission	Understands the interrelationships among competitive sourcing objectives and the Competitive Sourcing Balanced Scorecard, his/her agency’s mission, and any performance goals associated with the President’s Management Agenda.
Understanding of Sourcing	Identifies possible sources for the acquisition through effective market research and knowledge of suppliers; limits competition when it is appropriate to the acquisition situation based on business strategies and market environments; determines whether to limit competition to small business concerns or any subset thereof; collects and analyzes relevant market information from Government and non-Government sources.

3. Performance Work Statement (PWS) Team Leader

Participants reviewed key responsibilities of the PWS Team Leader's role and generated a list of professional business and technical competencies.

3.1 Role Definition

The following definition from the OMB Circular No. A-76 describes the PWS role:

The PWS team leader shall (1) be an inherently governmental agency official; (2) comply with both the FAR and this circular; (3) be independent of the ATO, HRA and MEO team; (4) develop the PWS and quality assurance surveillance plan; (5) determine Government-furnished property (GFP); (6) assist the CO in developing the solicitation; and (7) assist in implementing the performance decision.

3.2 Professional Business Competencies

The following professional business competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Professional Business Competencies	Definitions
Teamwork	Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust; fosters commitment; works with others to achieve goals; creates and manages high performing teams; delegates authority and responsibility to increase commitment and achieve collective success; uses his/her leadership capabilities to provide an effective context within which the team can perform successfully.

Competitive Sourcing Competencies

Project Management	Develops and maintains a workable plan and manages resources to accomplish the overall goal of the project; plans, manages and follows through to ensure the smooth flow and timely completion of activities that deliver project results; anticipates obstacles or gaps that would impact project success and works to continuously improve the agency's capability to achieve success; displays conscientiousness and dedication to tasks from beginning to end; displays respect for the agency's mission requirements and the commitment to meeting those requirements.
Interpersonal Skills	Shows understanding, courtesy, tact, empathy; develops and maintains supervisory and non-supervisory relationships; deals with difficult people; relates well to people from varied backgrounds; is sensitive to individual differences.
Planning and Evaluating	Organizes work, sets priorities, determines resource requirements, determines goals and strategies; coordinates with other organizations, monitors progress; evaluates outcomes.
Information Management and Data Gathering	Identifies a need for and knows where or how to gather information and data; organizes and maintains information, data and/or information management systems; accepts and incorporates accurate information and data even when unwelcome.
Communication (Oral and Written)	<u>Oral:</u> Expresses information to individuals, groups and multiple stakeholders (at all levels) effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; makes clear and convincing presentations, listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues. <u>Written:</u> Recognizes and uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information in a succinct and organized manner, produces written information that is appropriate for each intended audience.
Integrity/Honesty	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.
Stress Tolerance	Deals calmly and effectively with high stress situations (for example, tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, and dangerous situations); deals effectively with pressure; maintains focus and intensity and remains persistent, even under adversity.
Conflict Management	Resolves conflicts in a positive and constructive manner, including resolving project-related differences, promoting labor/management partnerships and dealing effectively with employee relations matters; attends to morale and organizational climate issues; handles administrative, labor management and EEO issues; remains thick-skinned, remains committed to principles and recovers quickly from setbacks.
Contracting/Procurement	Has knowledge of various types of contracts, techniques for contracting or procurement, and contract negotiation and administration; has working knowledge of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, agency-specific acquisition regulations and OMB Circular A-76.

Decision-Making	Makes sound, well informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change; maintains a commitment to being accountable and correcting any mistakes or oversights.
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3.3 Technical Competencies

The following technical competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Technical Competencies	Definitions
Linkage of PWS to Agency Mission	Understands the interrelationships among PWS objectives, his/her agency's mission and any performance goals associated with the President's Management Agenda.
Understanding of Competitive Sourcing Regulations	Has a thorough understanding of regulations concerning OMB Circular A-76, collective bargaining, right-of-refusal and conflict-of-interest issues; has understanding of the FAR, with particular specialized knowledge pertaining to FAR 15 and 22; displays a commitment to the spirit and letter of the FAR.
Understanding of CO Representative Responsibilities	Has a comprehensive understanding of all CO Representative Responsibilities, from acquisition planning phase through contract formation and administration.
Application of Effective Interviewing Techniques	Complies with all pertinent federal regulations and effective labor relations principles when conducting interviews (e.g., collective bargaining).
Understanding of the Marketplace	Collects and analyzes relevant market information from Government and non-Government sources; analyzes and provides business advice on acquisition and procurement requests; reviews and provides business advice in the preparation of requirements documents and related elements of an acquisition package.
Understanding of Stakeholder Analysis	Can collect and analyze information regarding stakeholder interests; can balance needs among multiple stakeholders.
Effective Use of PWS Communication Plans	Creates and implements effective PWS Communication Plans.
Effective Use of Performance Metrics	Can effectively monitor performance (at all levels) by evaluating actual performance processes, workflow requirements, and outputs against pre-determined goals.
Relevant Subject Matter Expertise	Possesses relevant, contract-related and mission-related subject matter expertise such that actions inform results, increase quality of work and enhance performance.

4. Source Selection Authority (SSA)

Participants reviewed key responsibilities of the SSA's role and generated a list of professional business and technical competencies.

4.1 Role Definition

The following definition from the OMB Circular No. A-76 describes the SSA role:

The SSA shall (1) be an inherently governmental agency official appointed in accordance with FAR Part 15.303; (2) comply with both the FAR and this circular when performing a streamlined and standard competition; and (3) be independent of the ATO, HRA, and MEO team. The SSA shall not appoint an SSEB [source selection evaluation board] until after public announcement.

4.2 Professional Business Competencies

The following professional business competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Professional Business Competencies	Definitions
Decision-Making	Makes sound, well informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change; maintains a commitment to being accountable and correcting any mistakes or oversights.
Leadership	Inspires, motivates and guides others toward goal accomplishment; empowers people by sharing power and authority; displays a high level of initiative, effort and commitment to public service; formulates effective strategies to balance the interests of external stakeholders and the business of the organization.
Integrity/Honesty	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.

Reasoning	Identifies rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data or other information; analyzes information and makes correct inferences or accurate conclusions.
Oral Communication	Expresses information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; makes clear and convincing presentations, listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues.
Influencing/Negotiating	Represents and speaks for the organizational unit and its work during discussions with other units, the CO, the ATO as well as representatives from the private sector; makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals and groups; persuades others to consider recommendations and cooperate; listens effectively and clarifies information; facilitates an open exchange of ideas; works with others towards an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.
Evaluating	Evaluates work and sets related priorities; evaluates resource expenditures against projected requirements; monitors progress and evaluates progress against goals and objectives; evaluates outcomes.
Conflict Management	Resolves conflicts in a positive and constructive manner, including resolving project-related differences; remains thick-skinned, remains committed to principles and recovers quickly from setbacks.
Effective Management of Customer Expectations	Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful and treats others with respect; identifies and integrates key issues affecting the organization, including political, economic, social, technological, and administrative factors.

4.3 Technical Competencies

The following technical competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Technical Competencies	Definitions
Relevant Subject Matter Expertise	Possesses relevant, contract-related subject matter expertise such that actions can inform results, increase quality of work and enhance performance.
Effective Identification of Sources	Can identify possible sources for the acquisition through effective market analysis and knowledge of suppliers; limits competition when it is appropriate to the acquisition situation based on business strategies and market environments; determines whether to limit competition to small business concerns or any subset thereof.
Understanding of Source Selection Planning	Has knowledge of relevant SSEB duties and the steps in the evaluation process; ensures that all evaluation activities are performed in accordance with regulatory requirements.
Understanding of Pertinent Regulations	Has a thorough understanding of regulations concerning OMB Circular A-76, collective bargaining, right-of-refusal and conflict-of-interest issues; has understanding of the FAR, with particular specialized knowledge pertaining to FAR 15 and 22; displays a commitment to the spirit and letter of the FAR.

Competitive Sourcing Competencies

Knowledge of Acquisition Strategy	Has a thorough understanding of acquisition strategy, the complexity involved in performing acquisitions and can effectively evaluate the inherent tradeoffs involved.
Understanding of the Marketplace	Collects and analyzes relevant market information from Government and non-Government sources; analyzes and provides business advice on acquisition and procurement requests; reviews and provides business advice in the preparation of requirements documents and related elements of an acquisition package.
Effective Use of Performance Metrics	Can effectively monitor performance by evaluating actual performance processes and outputs against pre-determined goals.

5. Human Resource Advisor (HRA)

Participants reviewed key responsibilities of the HRA's role and generated a list of professional business and technical competencies.

5.1 Role Definition

The following definition from the OMB Circular No. A-76 describes the HRA role:

The HRA shall (1) be an inherently governmental agency official and a human resource expert; (2) comply with this circular; (3) be independent of the CO, SSA, PWS team, and SSEB; (4) participate on the MEO team; and (5) be responsible for the following:

- (1) Employee and Labor-Relations Requirements. The HRA shall, at a minimum, perform the following (a) interface with directly affected employees (and their representatives) from the date of public announcement until full implementation of the performance decision; (b) identify adversely affected employees; (c) accomplish employee placement entitlements in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 351 (reduction-in-force procedures); (d) provide post-employment restrictions to employees; (e) determine agency priority considerations for vacant positions and establish a reemployment priority list(s) in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 330; and (f) provide the CO with a list of the agency's adversely affected employees, as required by this attachment and FAR 7.305(c) regarding the right of first refusal for a private sector performance decision.*
- (2) MEO Team Requirements. The HRA shall assist the ATO and MEO team in developing the agency tender. During development of the agency tender, the HRA shall be responsible for (a) scheduling sufficient time in competition milestones to accomplish potential human resource actions in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 351; (b) advising the ATO and MEO team on position classification restrictions; (c) classifying position descriptions, including exemptions based on the Fair Labor Standards Act (d) performing labor market analysis to determine the availability of sufficient labor to staff the MEO and implement the phase-in plan; (e) assisting in the development of the agency cost estimate by providing annual salaries, wages, night differentials, and premium pay; (f) assisting in the development of the timing for the phase-in plan based on MEO requirements; and (g) developing an employee transition plan for the incumbent agency organization early in the standard competition process.*

5.2 Professional Business Competencies

The following professional business competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Professional Business Competencies	Definitions
Teamwork	Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust; fosters commitment; works with others to achieve goals.
Stress Tolerance	Deals calmly and effectively with high stress situations (for example, tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, and dangerous situations); deals effectively with pressure to preserve high morale; maintains focus and intensity and remains persistent, even under adversity.
Communication (Oral and Written)	<u>Oral:</u> Expresses information to individuals, groups and multiple stakeholders (at all levels) effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; makes clear and convincing presentations, listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues. <u>Written:</u> Recognizes and uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information in a succinct and organized manner, produces written information that is appropriate for each intended audience.
Attention to Detail	Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.
Influencing/Negotiating	Represents and speaks for the organizational unit and its work to those within and outside the office; makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals and groups; persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; listens effectively and clarifies information; facilitates an open exchange of ideas; works with others towards an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.
Conflict Management	Resolves conflicts in a positive and constructive manner, including resolving project-related differences, promoting labor/management partnerships and dealing effectively with employee relations matters; attends to morale and organizational climate issues; handles administrative, labor management and EEO issues; remains thick-skinned, remains committed to principles and recovers quickly from setbacks.
Planning and Evaluating	Organizes work, sets priorities, determines resource requirements, determines goals and strategies; coordinates with other organizations, monitors progress; evaluates outcomes.
Integrity, Trust and Compassion	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; behaves in a manner that secures others' trust; displays compassion for others.

Project Management	Develops and maintains a workable plan and manages resources to accomplish the overall goal of the project; plans, manages and follows through to ensure the smooth flow and timely completion of activities that deliver project results; anticipates obstacles or gaps that would impact project success and works to continuously improve the agency's capability to achieve success; displays respect for the agency's mission requirements and the commitment to meeting those requirements.
Customer Focus	Balances the interests of clients and readily readjusts priorities to respond to customer demands; sets program standards and acts decisively to modify standards to promote customer service and/or the quality of programs and policies.
Interpersonal Skills and Stakeholder Relations	Shows understanding, courtesy, tact, empathy; develops and maintains relationships; deals with difficult people; relates well to people from varied backgrounds; is sensitive to individual differences.

5.3 Technical Competencies

The following technical competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Technical Competencies	Definitions
General knowledge of all federal HR specializations, manpower, OD, ERC, staffing (e.g., HR Director)	Understands all federal human resource specializations, manpower principles and workforce planning, organizational development processes, ERC and staffing principles.
Knowledge of agency workforce planning requirements	Maintains a current understanding of his/her agency's workforce planning requirements and applies that understanding to his/her work.
Knowledge of HR PMA initiatives (e.g., human capital)	Maintains a current understanding of how various President's Management Agenda-related objectives impact human resource issues and dynamics.
Knowledge of HR regulations and law	Understands all relevant human resource regulations, laws, policies and mandates.
Knowledge of A-76 process	Understands all elements of the A-76 process.
Knowledge of cost comparison forms	Understands all elements involved in cost comparison forms related to HR costing.
Understanding of HR staffing and cost projections	Understands fundamentals of human resource staffing, labor costs and labor cost projections.
Knowledge of Service Contract Act (SCA)	Has knowledge of the Service Contract Act and can apply relevant information to competitive sourcing issues.

6. Agency Tender Official (ATO)

Participants reviewed key responsibilities of the ATO's role and generated a list of professional business and technical competencies.

6.1 Role Definition

The following definition from the OMB Circular No. A-76 describes the ATO role:

The ATO shall (1) be an inherently governmental agency official with decision-making authority; (2) comply with this circular; (3) be independent of the contracting officer (CO), source selection authority (SSA), source selection evaluation board (SSEB), and performance work statement (PWS) team; (4) develop, certify, and represent the agency tender; (5) designate the most efficient organization (MEO) team after public announcement of the standard competition; (6) provide the necessary resources and training to prepare a competitive agency tender; and (7) be a directly interested party. An agency shall ensure that the ATO has access to available resources (e.g., skilled manpower, funding) necessary to develop a competitive agency tender.

6.2 Professional Business Competencies

The following professional business competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Professional Business Competencies	Definitions
Communication (Oral and Written)	<p><u>Oral</u>: Expresses information to individuals, groups and multiple stakeholders (at all levels) effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; makes clear and convincing presentations, listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues.</p> <p><u>Written</u>: Recognizes and uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information in a succinct and organized manner, produces written information that is appropriate for each intended audience.</p>
Interpersonal Skills and Stakeholder Relations	Shows understanding, courtesy, tact, empathy; develops and maintains relationships; deals with difficult people; relates well to people from varied backgrounds; is sensitive to individual differences.
Flexibility/Adaptability	Is open to change and new information; adapt behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacle; effectively deal with ambiguity.
Decision-Making	Makes sound, well informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change; maintains a commitment to being accountable and correcting any mistakes or oversights.
Creative Thinking	Uses imagination to develop new, out-of-the-box insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; designs new methods where established methods and procedures are not applicable or are unavailable.
Resilience	Is open to change and new information; tolerates ambiguity; adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; adjusts rapidly to new situations warranting attention and resolution; displays fortitude to being unpopular and making unpopular decisions.
Strategic Staffing	Assesses current and future agency's non-governmental activity and A-76 staffing needs based on organizational goals, business case analysis, and budget realities; applies merit principles to develop, select, and manage a diverse work force.
Conflict Management	Resolves conflicts in a positive and constructive manner, including resolving project-related differences, promoting labor/management partnerships and dealing effectively with employee relations matters; attends to morale and organizational climate issues; handles administrative, labor management and EEO issues; remains thick-skinned, remains committed to principles and recovers quickly from setbacks.

Competitive Sourcing Competencies

Integrity/Honesty	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.
Teamwork	Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust; fosters commitment; works with others to achieve goals; displays respect for the agency's mission requirements and the commitment to meeting those requirements.
Problem Solving	Anticipates, identifies and diagnoses problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives; selects from alternative courses of action; makes recommendations, and takes action from developed contingency plans.
Leadership	Inspires, motivates and guides others toward goal accomplishment; empowers people by sharing power and authority; displays a high level of initiative, effort and commitment to public service; formulates effective strategies to balance the interests of external stakeholders and the business of the organization; serves in an organizational stewardship or advocacy role; promotes the value of maintaining competitive advantage (much like a private company).
Customer Focus	Balances the interests of clients and readily readjusts priorities to respond to customer demands; sets program standards and acts decisively to modify standards to promote customer service and/or the quality of programs and policies.
Influencing/Negotiating	Represents and speaks for the organizational unit and its work to those within and outside the office; makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals and groups; persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; listens effectively and clarifies information; facilitates an open exchange of ideas; works with others towards an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.
Effective Management of Customer Expectations	Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful and treats others with respect; identifies and integrates key issues affecting the organization, including political, economic, social, technological, and administrative factors.

6.3 Technical Competencies

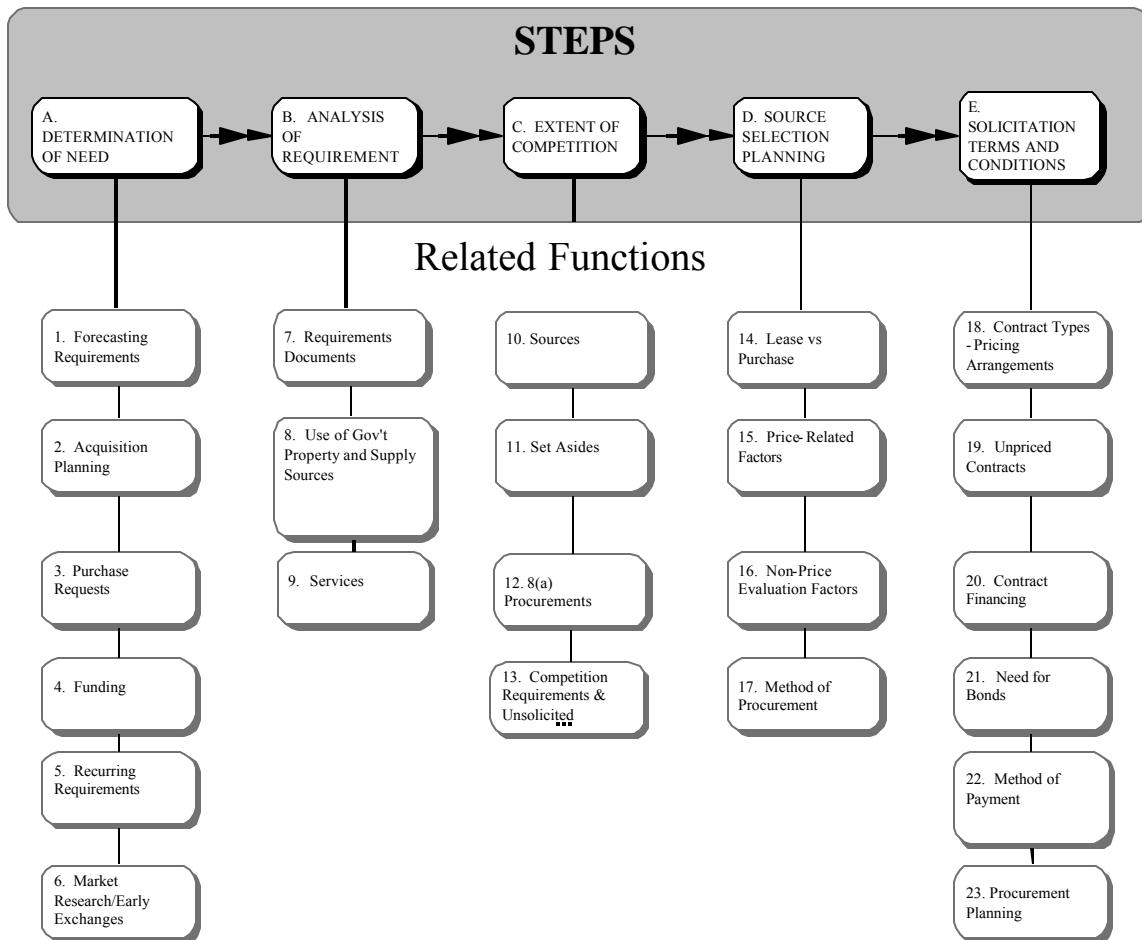
The following technical competencies were generated by focus group participants:

Technical Competencies	Definitions
Knowledge of General Position Classification	Has working knowledge of position classification in the federal Government and can apply that knowledge to agency tender matters.
Knowledge of Regulations	Has thorough knowledge of the FAR (including FAR-15), TGO decisions, activity based costing and business process reengineering; displays a commitment to the spirit and letter of the FAR.
Systems Analysis	Applies systems analysis, business process redesign modeling and workflow analysis to the development of solicitation requirements; selects appropriate offer evaluation factors for incorporation into the solicitation that tie back to clear and unambiguous technical requirements.
Knowledge of Industry Practices	Has knowledge of best practices from relevant organizations; uses benchmarking techniques to assess current performance and identify areas for improvement; applies relevant industry practices to Government competitive sourcing.
Bid Proposal Development	Prepares a written solicitation that includes the appropriate provisions and clauses tailored to the requirement and assembled in a format appropriate to the acquisition method and market for the required supply or service; responds to inquiries about the solicitation received prior to contract award or requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.
Relevant Subject Matter Expertise	Has thorough familiarity with the technical subject matter of relevance to contracts and programs; understands when and how to obtain detailed counsel from specialized subject matter experts; puts mission first, ahead of the typical civil service-wide cultural imperative to avoid reductions-in-force at all costs.
Contracting/Procurement	Has knowledge of various types of contracts, techniques for contracting or procurement, and contract negotiation and administration; has working knowledge of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, agency-specific acquisition regulations and OMB Circular A-76.
Cost Benefit Analysis	Has thorough knowledge of cost benefit analysis and can apply that knowledge to agency tender matters.
Understanding of the Relationship Between Information Technology and Operations	Understands how technology can be applied to the operation in question and can apply that knowledge to agency tender matters; is a respected executive official who can implement a wide range of solutions by applying his/her demonstrated successful experience in line operations management.
Linkage of MEO to Agency Mission/PMA	Understands the interrelationships among MEO objectives, his/her agency's mission and performance goals associated with the President's Management Agenda.

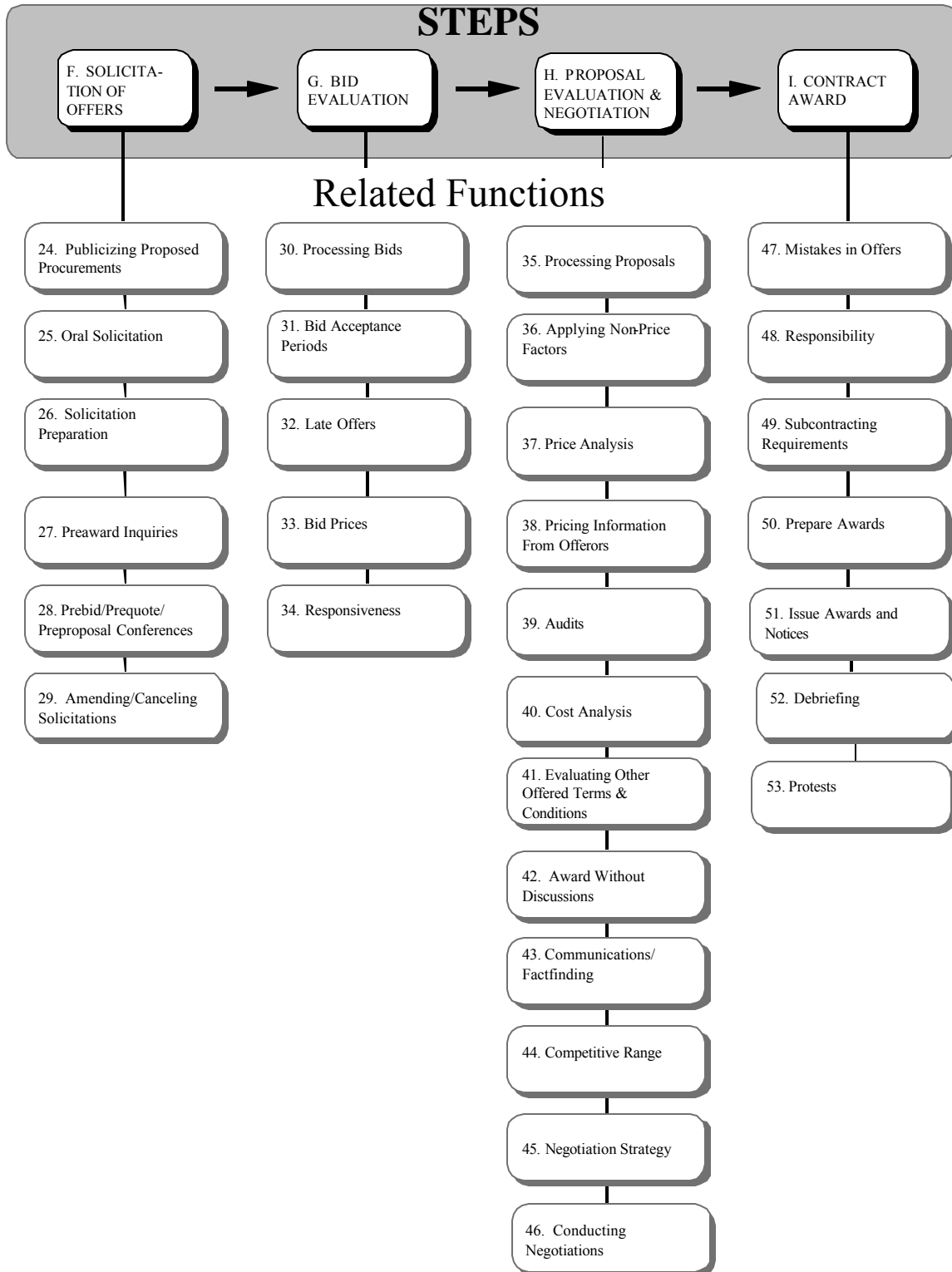
Appendix A. The Procurement Process

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS (Excerpt from FAI's 2002 Contract Specialist Workbook)

I. ACQUISITION PLANNING

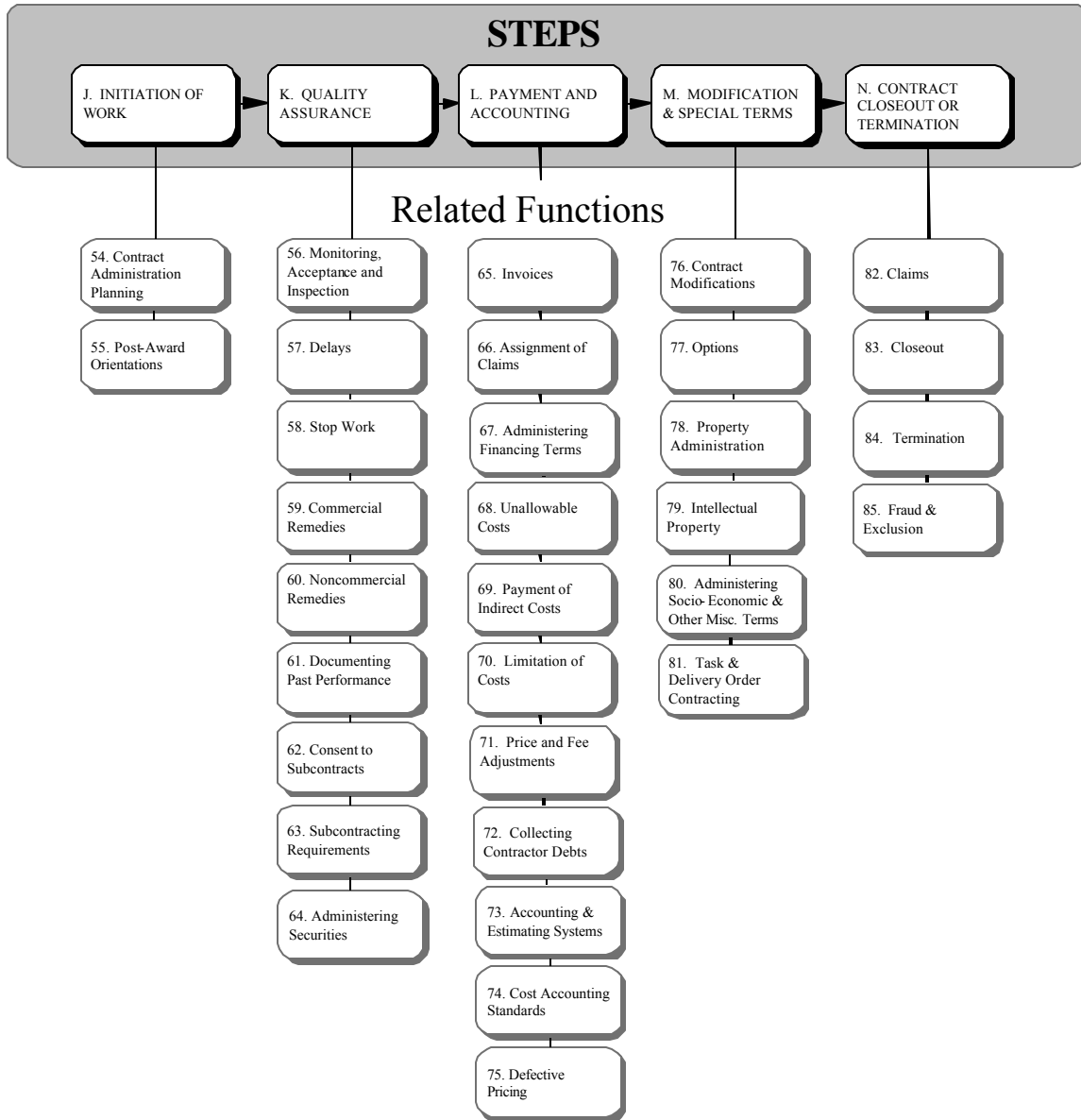


II. CONTRACT FORMATION



*51 - A representative in the Agency at hand, senior to the MEO, signs the required Letter of Obligation when the MEO is implemented.

III. CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION



*Provide quarterly reporting on contract/MEO costs to OMB.

Appendix B. Contracting Officer (CO) Critical Tasks

Focus group participants were asked to construct task statements that, taken together, account for all critical aspects of the CO's job. Tasks were ordered according to their respective location in a CO's workflow, with several general tasks performed throughout the process listed first.

General Tasks:

- Comply with FAR/Circular A-76.
- Conduct pre-proposal conferences.
- Provide debriefings to all respective parties.
- Document the official contract file.
- Manage supplier relations.
- Establish MEO failure to perform protocols.
- Provide procurement advice to SSEB.
- Perform price analysis/cost realism analysis.
- Understand GSA Rates.

Specific Tasks:

- Designate acquisition team.
 - Serve as member of PWS team.
 - Co-lead PWS development and provide guidance to the SSEB team lead on developing the SSP.
 - Conduct ethics briefing and maintain firewalls between PWS team and SSEB.
- Participate in acquisition planning.
- Perform market research.
 - Establish streamlined market research criteria.
 - Select contract prices for streamlined cost comparison.
- Write justification for best value selection strategy (A-76).
- Conduct standard Cost/ Technical Tradeoff (CTTO) evaluation criteria IAW A-76, no past performance
 - Approve performance criteria.
 - Monitor providers' performance.

- Coordinate implementation timeline with HR.
- Verify MEO costs calculated IAW A-76 Attachment C.
- Identify common costs in Request for Proposal (RFP).
- Determine source selection strategy; i.e., Low Priced Technically Acceptable (LPTA), tradeoff, etc.
- Publish cancellation and termination notices/Offer input to the publishing of the A-76 cancellation notice.
- Prepare and post solicitation package/PWS documents.
 - Complete A-76 standard competition form.
 - Develop and publish Request for Information (RFI) in FEDBIZOPS.
 - Process all RFIs input and distribute questions to the PWS team.
 - Publish answers to RFI on FEDBIZOPS.
 - Announce competition commencement in FEDBIZOPS.
- Issue solicitations/manage competitions.
- Implement/oversee right of first refusal.
- Serve as advocate of Government's position/ Act in the role of contest administrator and provide input as necessary to append.
- Coordinate technical evaluations.
- Prepare negotiation plan.
 - Negotiate contracts.
- Award contract or letter of obligation.
 - Execute letter of obligation.
- Announce performance decision in FEDBIZOPS.
- Prepare procurement's plan for post-award assessment.
- Be a member of the implementation team (post-award).
- Establish Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) team protocols for LOO.
- Address material deficiencies in offers.
- Approve source selection.
- Conduct contract administration.

Appendix C. Competitive Sourcing Official (CSO) Critical Tasks

Focus group participants were asked to construct task statements that, taken together, account for all critical aspects of the CSO's job. Tasks were ordered according to their respective location in a CSO's workflow, with several general tasks performed throughout the process listed first.

*Numbers in parentheses correspond to the responsibilities listed in the strawman.

**Tasks with a "D" have a Departmental-level emphasis, while tasks with an "E" have an Executive-level emphasis.

General Tasks:

- Review savings IAW Circular-D (first with CFO/Procurement Official and ultimately with OMB).
- Implement OMB A-76 Circular.
- Serve as an information conduit to senior officials and leadership.
- Markets competitive sourcing throughout organization.
 - Serve as primary agency rep for competitive sourcing, program funding, budget negotiations with OMB (program funding advocate)
- Develop and approve agency-level A-76 policies.

Specific Tasks:

- Appoint competition officials.
- Provide input to performance rating of competition officials (HRAs, CO, other officials)-accountability.
- Approve tradeoff source selection process.
- Approve source selection strategy.
- Approve competition plans.
- Approve bureau- or departmental-level deviations from A-76 Circular and submit to OMB-D.
- Delegate duties to senior officials where applicable.
- Grant waivers to time limitations.
- Evaluate CO's documentation and decide next steps then no private sector bid received-D.
- Justify agency's decision to provide Government furnished facilities or property.

- Exempts/grants GFP or non-GFP in acquisition strategy.
- Obtain approval from OMB for performance period in excess of five years.
- Exercise option to extend performance period for high performance organizations.
 - Notify OMB of time limit extensions.
- Write justification for IG/Exempt positions (FAIR ACT)-D.
 - Adjudicate and make decisions on all FAIR ACT inventory challenge decision appeals - D.
- Approve inventory Code A, IG, and exemptions.
- Approve cancellation of competitions.

Appendix D. Performance Work Statement (PWS) Team Leader Critical Tasks

Focus group participants were asked to construct task statements that, taken together, account for all critical aspects of the PWS Team Leader's job. Tasks were ordered according to their respective location in a PWS's workflow, with several general tasks performed throughout the process listed first.

*Numbers in parentheses correspond to the responsibilities listed in the strawman.

**Tasks with a "D" have a Departmental-level emphasis, while tasks with an "E" have an Executive-level emphasis.

General Tasks:

- Coordinate and work closely with the CO.
- Maintain firewall with MEO team.
- Manage project timelines.
- Brief leadership and affected employees on process and progress.

Specific Tasks:

- Provide input in acquisition strategy.
- Appoints the PWS team.
- Train other team members.
- Ensure access and availability of subject-matter expert (SME) to create Section C-5.
- Conduct work breakdown structure/analysis.
 - Develop workload measurement system.
- Identify outcomes (results).
 - Write performance-based requirements.
- Identify acceptable quality levels.
 - Obtain performance metrics for incorporation into PWS.
 - Separate inherently Government performed tasks from scope of work.
 - Ensure accuracy, completeness, and appropriateness of performance metrics.
- Develops the quality assurance surveillance plan.

- Identify and review workload PWS/crosswalk.
- Ensure quality of process.
- Input into/identify PWS incentives (positive/negative, monetary/non-monetary) business strategy to CO.
- Develop Government furnished property/equipment/facilities lists.
 - Develop responses to RFI questions and solicitation questions (closely with CO).
- Coordinate activity write-ups from area experts (part of team management).
- Transition from PWS team lead to implementation team lead.

Appendix E. Source Selection Authority (SSA) Critical Tasks

Focus group participants were asked to construct task statements that, taken together, account for all critical aspects of the SSA's job. Tasks were ordered according to their respective location in a SSA's workflow, with several general tasks performed throughout the process listed first.

*Numbers in parentheses correspond to the responsibilities listed in the strawman.

**Tasks with a "D" have a Departmental-level emphasis, while tasks with an "E" have an Executive-level emphasis.

General Tasks:

- Comply with both the FAR and OMB Circular No. A-76 when performing a streamlined and standard competition.

Specific Tasks:

- Appoint an SSEB after public announcement.
- Certify the standard competition form in a phased evaluation source selection process/Certify the standard competition form in a tradeoff source selection process and documenting, in the case of award to other than the lowest cost provider, the tradeoffs used and justification for the tradeoffs/ Sign the standard competition form to certify the decision in a standard competition/ Sign, in the event of no satisfactory private sector or public reimbursable source and the decision to implement the agency tender, the standard competition form and indicate the reason for the CSO's decision to implement the agency tender (4, 5, 7/3).
- Remove offers or tenders that are unable to resolve deficiencies (6 material deficiencies).
- Ensure that the CO offers a debriefing to all private sector offerors, public reimbursable sources, the ATO, and directly affected Government personnel (and their representatives), in accordance with FAR 15.503 (8).
- Subsequent to the decision... SSEB->CO->decision-making; SSA=defending decisions; supporting CO; debrief/contest period.
- Applies understanding of technical evaluation process; applies SME knowledge into contest process.

- Approves source selection plan.
- Participates in negotiations as technical liaison (not for all agencies).

Appendix F. Human Resource Advisor (HRA) Critical Tasks

Focus group participants were asked to construct task statements that, taken together, account for all critical aspects of the HRA's job. Tasks were ordered according to their respective location in a HRA's workflow, with several general tasks performed throughout the process listed first.

*Numbers in parentheses correspond to the responsibilities listed in the strawman.

**Tasks with a "D" have a Departmental-level emphasis, while tasks with an "E" have an Executive-level emphasis.

General Tasks:

- Comply with OMB Circular No. A-76.
- Interface with directly affected employees (and their representatives) from the date of public announcement until full implementation of the performance decision (3)
 - Needs to start with planning not at the public announcement time.

2 Classes of HRA Tasks:

- (1) MEO
- (2) Employee Interface

MEO Tasks:

- Participate on the MEO team (2)
- Help the ATO and MEO team in developing the agency tender (9)
- Perform labor market analysis to determine the availability of sufficient labor to staff the MEO and implement the phase-in plan (13) One way to help MEO
- Note: For large, complicated designate HR Reps on MEO; for small competitions, it can be the same person.

Employee Interface:

- Identify adversely affected employees/ Accomplish employee placement entitlements in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 351 (reduction-in-force procedures) (4/5)
- Provide info to buyout/early retirement requests.

- Coordinate/participate in soft-landing programs.
 - Implement federal assistance programs.
 - Determine agency priority considerations for vacant positions and establish a reemployment priority list(s) in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 330 (7)
- Provide the CO with a list of the agency's adversely affected employees, as required by this attachment and FAR 7.305(c) regarding the right of first refusal for a private sector performance decision (8)
- Schedule sufficient time in competition milestones to accomplish potential human resource actions in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 351 (10)
 - Integrate with overall project plan
- Advise the ATO and MEO team on position classification restrictions/Classify position descriptions, including exemptions based on the Fair Labor Standards Act (11/12)
- Help in the development of the agency cost estimate by providing annual salaries, wages, night differentials, and premium pay (14)
- Participate in or designate personnel to participate in union negotiations
- Participate in implementation team.
- Develop cost models/estimates.
- Develop communication plans.
- Provide input into HR PMA initiatives for business case analysis.
- Assist with Service Contract Act applicability (e.g., associated costs).

Appendix G. Agency Tender Official (ATO) Critical Tasks

Focus group participants were asked to construct task statements that, taken together, account for all critical aspects of the ATO's job. Tasks were ordered according to their respective location in an ATO's workflow, with several general tasks performed throughout the process listed first.

*Numbers in parentheses correspond to the responsibilities listed in the strawman.

**Tasks with a "D" have a Departmental-level emphasis, while tasks with an "E" have an Executive-level emphasis.

Regulatory Compliance-Related Tasks:

- Develop an agency tender that includes: an MEO, an agency cost estimate developed in accordance with Attachment C of OMB Circular No. A-76 and approved by the ATO, the MEO's quality control plan, the MEO's phase-in plan, and copies of any existing, awarded MEO subcontracts/Submit the agency tender in a sealed package to the CO by the solicitation closing date, or notify the CO as early as possible if the agency tender is not expected to be delivered by that date (7 & 8)

Regulatory compliance -> Comply with OMB Circular No. A-76/ Make changes, when allowed, to the agency tender following the solicitation closing date (1,10)

Specific Tasks:

- Obtains designation and "blessing" from mission executive to secure credibility.
- Makes high-level decisions, difficult decisions. (Atmosphere of denial; communications must be blunt.)
- Ensure adequate level of funding between award and implementation.
- Designate the most efficient organization (MEO) team after public announcement of the standard competition (3)
 - Designated prior to solicitation
- Gain confidence of mission manager.
- Create an initial structure of what he wanted the product (the bid) to look like (e.g., section C of solicitation and adequately address evaluation criteria.
- Define relationships and roles of support contractors (related to MEO).

- Need to take and maintain ownership of this process. Spearhead the proposal.
[Saw himself as the point on the spear.]
- Gain and maintain trust and confidence of the team.
- Provide the necessary resources and training to prepare a competitive agency tender (4)
 - Identify external support required and obtain it as needed.
- Appoint an MEO team comprised of technical and functional experts (5)
 - Develop an MEO team with the technical, functional, and operational expertise to write an effective proposal. (Operational expertise is key to overcoming task hurdles.)
- Make all final management decisions regarding the agency tender (6)
 - Interfaces with decision authority on agency tender.
- Propose alternate performance standards, if allowed in the solicitation (9)
 - Design solutions that exceed minimum standards of the solicitation.
- Interface with HRA for MEO development
- ATO has to be the MEO champion.
- Create the mindset in the MEO or team that you are now incorporated (e.g., think like a business, act like a business, etc.)
- Focus on competitive advantage like private sector.