eGov Initiative Transforms the Acquisition Process
by Lisa Cliff

"Implementation of E-Government is important in making Government more responsive and cost-effective."

President George W. Bush
July 10, 2002

Using technology well can considerably improve how Federal agencies perform work processes and can provide one-stop services to citizens. In Oct. 2001, President Bush's Management Council selected 24 projects from among hundreds of ideas for eGovernment with the mission to move toward an efficient unified electronic Government. The plan for implementing eGovernment is being led by Mark Forman, Associate Director of Information Technology and e-Government of the Office of Management and Budget. In an unprecedented approach, teams from multiple federal agencies are working together under the sponsorship of some of the large agencies to accomplish a far-reaching modernization effort that will transform how the government goes about its business.

In order to elicit the most dramatic results for such a comprehensive endeavor, the program focuses on multi-agency initiatives that improve citizen services and yield the greatest performance gains. One of the high payoff initiatives that eGovernment has embraced is the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE). Cross agency teams are working together on the GSA managed Integrated Acquisition Environment with the goal of unifying and simplifying how acquisition professionals across all agencies achieve their desired outcomes.

Five modules make up IAE:

1. BPN (Business Partner Network) – Will deploy a single point of registration and validation of supplier data accessed by all agencies. The BPN is an expanded CCR (Central Contractor Registration) www.ccr.gov. It will be linked to other vendor-oriented databases including PPIRS, SBA PRO-Net, EEOC, Excluded Parties, and an on-line representations and certifications application called ORCA.

2. FPDS-NG (Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation)-Will implement a central point for consolidated collection and access of statistical and management information related to Government acquisitions. This is a modernization of the current Federal Procurement Data System.

3. eCatalogs/Interagency Contracts-Will create an online directory of GWAC and multi agency contracts to simplify selection and facilitate leverage of Government buying. For the first time, there will be a single searchable repository for all interagency contracts.

4.   Standard eTransactions/Interfaces – Will develop a standard glossary and vocabulary to facilitate exchange of data between and within agencies. This is the backbone of IAE.

5.   IGT (Intra-governmental Transactions) – Will transform intra-governmental ordering and billing, reduce payment and collection problems, and enable swift and accurate revenue and expense elimination processes for preparing consolidated financial statements. This will revolutionize the processes by which goods and services are ordered between agencies.

The services will be a constellation of capabilities built on uniform standards instead of separate systems "owned" by disparate organizations. It will serve as the access point for various services and will provide a set of tools and capabilities that can be leveraged by the acquisition community to conduct business across the government. The IAE will provide access to Internet-based software solutions, acquisition capabilities and value-added services required to support the entire acquisition lifecycle in a unified and fully integrated manner.

IAE provides an enormous opportunity to leverage the government's investment in IT as well as in human capital. No longer will processes be duplicated in the various agencies and departments, rather through shared services they will be streamlined and simplified. Finally, the Federal Government, as he largest purchaser in the world, will have a mechanism to leverage its buying power and make better purchasing decisions.

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