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Increasing Environmental Services Buying Power Through Strategic Sourcing - Continued

By Randy Cerar

The operational Army has dedicated itself to transformation as a deliberate, strategic initiative to shed old concepts and processes so that we can successfully face an era of persistent conflict while laying the foundation for a lasting peace in the future.

Those of us in the generating force of the Army are also being called upon to transform. Our senior leadership has challenged us to better support our warfighters, to adapt and fully exploit technology, and to improve our installations' business processes.

Private industry has long understood the importance of optimizing business processes and using best practices in order to achieve lasting improvements. Companies in the Fortune 100 have used strategic sourcing to achieve significant savings on their purchased expenses.

The Installation Management Command (IMCOM) has an opportunity to take advantage of the tremendous scope of effort and farreaching expertise to create the kind of "force multiplier" that strategic sourcing can generate. Currently, we have achieved many localized successes that provide value at individual posts. However, to date, there has not been a process that provides the force multiplier effect across many installations.

By changing our current business model to one that leverages the buying power of IMCOM, installations can optimize available funding and emphasize the use of best business practices and innovations routinely used by industry. The U.S. Army Environmental Command (USAEC) currently is implementing the strategic sourcing process for the acquisition of environmental services.

Background

Strategic sourcing is the "collaborative and structured process of critically analyzing an organization's spending and using this information to make business decisions about acquiring commodities and services more effectively and efficiently" (OMB, 2005 Memo). The strategic sourcing process analyzes what an organization buys, how it buys, and from whom it buys.

In 2005, the President's Office of Management and Budget required chief acquisition officers of all federal agencies to identify at least three commodities to apply strategic sourcing processes and to report the status of these efforts. As the organization tasked with acquiring all the services and products required to manage the Army's installations, IMCOM contracts for more than \$4 billion in goods and services per year. These dollars represent a significant "throw weight" for the IMCOM enterprise to leverage its buying power with industry.

The chief of the enterprise acquisition branch of IMCOM's Plans Division, with the support of the strategic sourcing specialty firm Censeo Consulting Group, launched an IMCOM-wide strategic sourcing program in 2005 (IMCOM Strategic Sourcing Initiative, 2007). During the opportunity analysis phase of the program, the team initially identified five spending categories as areas of strategic sourcing opportunity:

- Facilities maintenance and repair services
- Municipal services
- Food services
- Automated data processing equipment
- Environmental services



Figure 1: Strategic Sourcing – Five-Step Process.

The IMCOM team is currently in Phase IIB of the IMCOM Strategic Sourcing Initiative. (Source: IMCOM Strategic Sourcing of Environmental Services)

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STRATEGIC SOURCING OBJECTIVES AT IMCOM

- ★ Reduce Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for the acquisition of goods and services throughout IMCOM
- \star Ensure quality and efficient service delivery by structuring the right relationships with suppliers
- ★ Support the overall IMCOM goal of delivering services within benchmarked costs while driving down overall requirements

The ultimate goal is to support IMCOM's mission to provide equitable, effective, and efficient management of Army installations worldwide

Figure 2: Summary of IMCOM's Goals for Strategic Sourcing (Source: IMCOM Strategic Sourcing of Environmental Services)

Five region-led strategic sourcing teams were established in order to implement the standard Department of Defense (DoD) strategic sourcing process (Figure 1) to assess the five commodities.

Implementing the Strategic Sourcing Concept for Environmental Services

Strategic sourcing has become a critical focus area within the entire federal government, specifically within DoD. At the Army level, IMCOM has been at the forefront of incorporating strategic sourcing into the way it makes its purchasing decisions. IMCOM's goals for strategic sourcing are summarized in Figure 2.

The strategic sourcing analysis for environmental services was initiated by Headquarters IMCOM, and led by the IMCOM Pacific Region with support from USAEC, IMCOM installations, and Censeo Consulting Group. The strategic sourcing team is implementing the five-step process described at Figure 1 and has completed the commodity profile (Step 1), conducted a supply market analysis (Step 2) and developed a commodity strategy (Step 3). USAEC is currently in the process of acquiring contracts to provide environmental services to the IMCOM enterprise (Step 4). Details are discussed in the following explanation of the five step process.

Step 1: Commodity Profile. As illustrated by Figure 3, the strategic sourcing team examined the procurement of IMCOM's environmental services by analyzing spending data, interviewing key customers and evaluating contracts.

The Commodity Profile included several important findings:

- IMCOM's contracting of environmental services is fragmented and varies across installations and IMCOM regions. As a large enterprise, IMCOM does not leverage its buying power because it fragments its contracting support.
- IMCOM installations procure similar environmental services that are much more alike, than different. Installation interviews and contract reviews indicate that IMCOM installations procure similar services such as studies, development of plans, assessments and audits.

• As a result of the fragmentation and variation in procuring environmental services, IMCOM pays different prices for the same environmental service or product, particularly for staff augmentation.

 IMCOM installations vary in use of contracting agencies and pay varying fees for contracting services. Each installation chooses the contract method on a caseby-case basis and contract agencies may include the Army Contracting Command (ACC), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and General Services Administration. Additionally, installations use different contracting methods and agencies to procure the same service.

Step 2: Conduct Supply Market Analysis. Censeo Consulting Group conducted a detailed analysis of the supply market for environmental services. This analysis identified key environmental industry attributes including:

- The environmental services industry comprises several thousand companies and is marked by intense competition. The size and competitive atmosphere of the supply market provide a potential opportunity for IMCOM to leverage its buying power to get the best pricing and contract terms.
- Performance-Based Acquisition (PBA) has gained popularity among private industry clients. This presents an opportunity

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for IMCOM to improve quality of services and value by using PBAs where appropriate.

Step 3: Develop Commodity Strategy. Figure 4 identifies key sourcing strategies and tactics for improving the procurement of goods and services. These strategies and tactics were applied to IMCOM's contracting of environmental services to develop a commodity strategy. The strategic sourcing team evaluated these strategies and tactics in conjunction with the Commodity Profile and Market Analysis findings for environmental services in order to develop a commodity strategy for IMCOM.

Step 4: Issue Request for Proposal and Negotiate. The IMCOM team currently is implementing the recommendations from the strategic sourcing analysis and is in the early stages of the acquisition process to award contracts for environmental services. To expand on these recommendations, USAEC anticipates awarding four environmental quality

Spend

Analysis

Reviews

Stakeholder

Interviews

contracts: cultural resources, natural resources, environmental compliance, and management and professional services.

Each of these contracts will be Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) contracts with multiple contractors on each to ensure competition at the task order level. The ACC's Fort Bragg Directorate of Contracting will be awarding and managing the contracts that will complement existing ones and provide an alternative that is more performance-based. This will be available to all installations, regions, headquarters, and reserve units under IMCOM as well as other Army Commands.

These contracts will not only allow IMCOM to leverage its buying power in the environmental services industry, but they will also standardize the identification of requirements and provide a contract vehicle to fulfill environmental support requirements with a mission-funded contract agency.

Develop an internal fact base to understand current spend characteristics and elements of total cost of ownership

Contract Develop an internal fact base to understand current procurement vehicles and detailed user requirements

> Interview customers, contracting community and other relevant stakeholders and internal experts to gather qualitative and quantitative information to supplement the spend analysis and contracts review and provide an compre-hensive view of the commodity.

The Commodity Profile helps identify and select the appropriate strategic sourcing improvement target areas through a thorough understanding of both spend and customer requirements

Figure 3: Commodity Profile (Source: IMCOM Strategic Sourcing of Environmental Services)

Increasing Environmental Services Buying Power Through Strategic Sourcing - Continued

By Randy Cerar

SOURCING STRATEGIES



SOURCING TACTICS

- \star Standardize Specifications
- \star **Contract Structure**
- **Quality Assurance Process**

Figure 4: Key Sourcing Strategies and Tactics

(Source: IMCOM Strategic Sourcing of Environmental Services)

Step 5: Implement and Manage Performance, Following award of the environmental services contracts, IMCOM will continue to evaluate opportunities to more effectively and efficiently procure environmental services. Opportunities to implement tactics, such as the centralized procurement of similar services across IMCOM or standardized performance work statements for typical services, will be evaluated and applied where it makes business sense. As part of the PBA process, contractor performance will be evaluated against the performance and quality standards defined in each task order.

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Strategic Sourcing at IMCOM

Previous initiatives to implement strategic sourcing have not only provided costs savings, but in many cases have improved the quality of products provided under strategic contracts. Three successful projects provide some insight into the successes that environmental services strategic contracting can realize.

Cultural Resources

In 2005, a pilot project to centralize cultural resources contracting identified and leveraged several strategic sourcing opportunities across multiple installations. USAEC led a team to assist installations in funding urgent studies associated with Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) environmental requirements.

Under the BRAC 2005 realignment, major receiving installations were subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and required **Environmental Impact Statements** (EIS). IMCOM and the Corps of Engineers were faced with a very short deadline to complete multiple EIS's within 12 months, instead of the usual two-year completion period per study. As part of preparations for BRAC, environmental studies such as natural resource surveys, archeological inventories and evaluations, noise and other studies were required to determine what resources might be affected by the proposed realignments.

Given the short time frame and limited budget to provide these supporting studies, the team implemented a pilot. It tested a centralized approach and procured several of the studies at one time instead of purchasing projects piecemeal at individual installations. The inventory and evaluation projects for cultural resource requirements that were generated by construction, renovations and training activities associated with BRAC, were combined for central procurement. The process procured similar installation actions centrally and eliminated several nonvalue-added approval steps.

The project team elected to use cooperative agreements as the contracting vehicles for these centrally procured projects, and identified highly qualified cultural resource firms with military and installation experience to carry out the research required. Cooperative agreements allow the Army to work directly with other entities for the preservation, management, maintenance and improvement of military installations.

During the pilot, 15 projects were procured for: Fort Benning, Ga., Fort Knox, Ky., Fort Riley, Kan., Fort AP Hill, Va. and Fort Lewis, Wash. Three firms were selected for these projects. One firm was awarded all of the projects at three different installations. At one of these installations they were competing against the incumbent ID/ IQ contractor for cultural resources through the cooperative agreement procurement process and were able to cut the rates charged by the incumbent contractor in half.

One of the strategic sourcing techniques applied in this media area was the request for discounts. Cultural resource procurements are usually comprised of small projects with award values between \$50,000 and \$300,000. Because five installations had multiple projects, the Army was able to leverage its buying power through the synergies among multiple similar projects at individual installations as a means of saving money. Awarding all of an installation's projects to one firm would allow the firm to save money by setting up teams in the field fewer times as they moved directly from one project to the next at the same installation. The firm's savings were then translated into discounts for the government.

If firms felt that a discount for a larger procurement action was reasonable. they included a discount based on the size of the award. Examples of these discounts varied based on the size of the award, but included a certain percentage discount for every dollar over a certain threshold. As a result of these types of savings, the Army was able to procure for less than \$2 million of what was estimated by individual installations' cost estimates to be more than \$3 million in projects, realizing a 42 percent savings over direct installation procurement of the same projects.

All involved installations reported that the products have met or surpassed their requirements on a timely basis. An indirect result of this strategic sourcing project was that the same installation re-competed its ID/IQ contract and brought its own costs down to the rates that strategic sourcing was able to achieve now driven by new market forces. As an added benefit, Fort Benning's own ID/ IQ rates were lowered to meet the rates procured centrally, and Fort Riley now uses this vehicle regularly. While the end results included significant savings to the Army, other key success factors included the overall quality of the products delivered and the speed with which crucial BRAC 2005 milestones were met.

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Cleanup: Increasing Use of Performance-Based Acquisitions One of the earliest examples of implementing an enterprise-wide solution is the use of PBAs within the Army's Installation Restoration Program (IRP).

In April 2003, the Army introduced a new cleanup strategy and accompanying plan that combined restoration and compliance-related cleanup to create consistency and accountability across the Army's cleanup program. One of the nine main objectives of the strategy was to support the development and use of cost-effective cleanup approaches and technologies to improve program efficiency.

To achieve this objective, the Army identified Performance-Based Contracting (PBC), now referred to as PBA, as a preferred business strategy that incorporates the use of proven commercial sector practices and incentives into the procurement of environmental remediation services. PBA is the government's preferred contracting approach for acquiring services. A PBA requires the contractor to achieve specific performance objectives, typically for a fixed price, based on a performance work statement.

Although the initial reason for using the PBA strategy was to lock remediation contractors into schedules to complete the cleanup program, the most dramatic outcome has been cost savings. From fiscal 2001 through fiscal 2007, implementation of PBA has resulted in cost savings of over \$300 million when compared to the Army's cost-to-complete estimates. Based on the PBA record, USAEC estimates a minimum of an additional \$13 million in savings from the projected fiscal 2008 PBA awards. In addition, the ability of PBA to lock in the costs and completion schedules through performance standards, fixed price contracts, and environmental insurance, ensures that the Army will not continue to experience cost-tocomplete escalation and schedule slippages for more than 1,000 sites.

In 2004, Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, developed a multiphase acquisition strategy to accelerate its environmental cleanup program. With the use of the PBA approach, the installation has been able to accelerate its projected remedy-in-place/response complete dates by three years, and reduce its projected total cost-tocomplete estimate by \$60 million.

Since fiscal 2001, USAEC has successfully awarded 67 performancebased acquisitions for environmental remediation services through various contracting agencies. These contracts and task orders range in size from \$500,000 to \$52.4 million, and include both closing properties under BRAC as well as some of the Army's most complex active installations.

The USAEC PBA team has started tracking the cost and schedule execution of the PBA contracts/task orders awarded from fiscal 2001 to present. The PBAs represent a variety of Army programs, including the IRP, Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP), Compliance Cleanup (CC) program and BRAC Environmental Restoration Program. Preliminary analysis indicates that very few cost or schedule modifications have occurred. Of the 67 PBAs with a total award value of approximately \$715 million, cost increase modifications have totaled less than 1 percent and only 10 percent have been modified to extend the period of performance at no additional cost to the Army.

Contract scopes address a range of activities including investigation through monitoring and site closeout, as well as a variety of technical challenges including munitions and explosives of concern. The contracts are most often a firm-fixed price and 44 percent of the contracts for active installations required contractors to purchase environmental insurance in the form of remediation stop loss insurance (also known as cleanup cost cap insurance).

Cost reductions were not the only benefits. Innovative solutions, quality services, and the reinvestment of cost savings into the investigation and cleanup of other contaminated sites are furthering the Army's program completion goals.

Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) Site Inspections

To improve the schedules and costs associated with the MMRP Site Inspection (SI) program, USAEC and **USACE** Baltimore District implemented a strategic sourcing procurement by developing a PBA for MMRP Site Inspections. The PBA provided opportunities for the contractor to determine the most effective method of executing many aspects of the work and based payment milestones on acceptance of key deliverables. The contract was competed and the performance-based task order saved more than \$6 million. These savings in time and money will allow the MMRP SI program to complete its

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site inspections earlier than planned and invest those savings back into cleaning up the MMRP sites.

Conclusion

As these examples illustrate, the cost savings and efficiency improvements from the strategic sourcing of environmental services will allow the Army to accomplish more environmental work with equal or better quality. IMCOM will use this tool to drive change that transforms the installation environmental quality program. Strategically procured contracts for environmental services will implement the key tactics that will allow IMCOM to leverage its "throw weight" by standardizing specifications, improving contract mechanisms and ensuring competitive pricing. By implementing strategic sourcing, IMCOM will complement grass-roots efforts with enterprisewide solutions that move the environmental program forward for the best interests of Soldiers, their Families and the long-term mission. The Army must sustain its critical resources that form an essential part of Army readiness and quality of life.

Interested parties may find more information about the current status of the environmental services strategic sourcing project on the USAEC Web site at http://aec.army.mil/usaec/ business/index.html

The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) offers continuous-learning modules related to strategic sourcing, including a strategic sourcing overview, at http://clc.dau.mil/. Randy Cerar serves as the technical director of the U.S. Army Environmental Command. He manages activities concerning conservation, restoration, compliance, pollution prevention and related program operations in support of the Army's environmental programs.

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