

Deputy Administrator's Listening Post Notes
April 24, 2007
2:00 p.m. est

Moderator - Curtis Wilburn Jr., Assistant Deputy Administrator, AFM

Attendees: Veronica Jameson (BA), Gail Champagne (MSA), Susan Herrin (MSA), Mellissa Brockes (MWA), Kristine Foight (MWA), Susan C. Barley (NAA), Diane Emerson (NAA), Mary Holmberg (NAA), Kathleen Peterson (NPA), Bruce W. Rittel (NPA), Janice Brown (SPA), Shari Comer (SPA), Rhonda Korger (SPA), missing PWA and SAA.

Mr. Wilburn thanked everyone for participating and explained why Jim was not able to participate but wished he could. Mr. Wilburn then proceeded to take role call and open the conference with the questions submitted by the LAO's.

The following topics were submitted in advance and discussed at the April 24, 2007, Deputy Administrator's Listening Post:

AFM Mentoring Program

Question: What is the status of the AFM Mentoring Program?

Response:

- AFM Mentoring Program began in Fall of 2001
- Program was small - averaged about 10-12 pairs (mentors and mentees) each year, but very successful as judged by the participants
- Program was run the way a top notch mentoring program should be run, i.e., training for mentors and mentees, committee oversight, high-level management, outside expertise, etc.
- The costs of such a program became prohibitively high – consultant fee, training, travel, kickoff and graduation event (For AFM: \$30k plus/year)
- Decision was made to put the program on hiatus

Due to Budget cost the AFM Mentoring Program has been put on hold. AFM is hopeful that it may be reinstated sometime in the near future provided that the budget concerns can be minimized.

Integrated Acquisition System (IAS)

Question: Where can I find a legend for IAS document types that appear in BRIO? In particular, the "IC's" and "IM's". In addition it would be nice to know when and what roll they play in the IAS sequence of events.

Response:

Document types in IAS correspond to the following document types in FFIS/BRIO:

IAS		FFIS/BRIO
Requisition	=	Commitment (IQ)
Order/Contract	=	Obligation (IO)
Receipt	=	Receiver (IC)
Invoice	=	Payment Voucher (IM)

This information can be found on the USDA IAS Web site homepage, left sidebar under: "Quick Tips," "FFIS." The direct web page address for this information is:

https://ias.usda.gov/Quick_Tips/Cross_Reference_Documents_IAS_to_FFIS.html

Question: In a couple of months it will be time to look at deobligating some IAS orders that won't spend the full amount initially obligated. I have heard nothing from anyone regarding what the step by step process will be or even if we can do this in IAS. I would like to put a plan in place to perform this

Response:

IAS is designed to automatically send a message to FFIS to deobligate funds identified as excess. There are three ways to deobligate excess funds in IAS. Behind each method is the web page address for the step-by-step guide for this procedure.

1. Requisitions not awarded in IAS. The Budget Approver cancels the requisition before an order/contract (obligation) is awarded. The requisitioner should contact the buying office to inform them the requisition is being canceled. IAS will send a message to FFIS the requisition is canceled and deobligate the funds.

https://ias.usda.gov/Downloads/Requisitioner/Canceling_a_Requisition.pdf

2. Requisitions awarded in IAS. If an order/contract is awarded against the requisition, only the Contracting Officer (CO) can deobligate funds. The requisitioner should contact the CO to modify the award amount of the order/contract that has funds that are no longer needed. The CO should first obtain the balance of remaining funds from FFIS to be deobligated. If interest penalty payments have been paid against the order/contract, the balance of funds on an order/contract may be impacted. The CO must create a modification in IAS to change the award amount of the order/contract. Once the modification is signed by the CO, and approved in IAS, IAS will send a message to FFIS to deobligate the excess funds on the order/contract.

https://ias.usda.gov/Downloads/Acquisitioner/Acquisition_Modify_a_Contract.pdf

3. Goods or services fully received for a requisition. If all the goods or services for a requisition are received, the requisitioner/receiver enters a full receipt in IAS for the goods or services. IAS will send a message to FFIS to deobligate any remaining funds on

the order/contract. If there is a partial receipt in IAS that is later determined to be the final payment, the requisitioner must correct the partial receipt in IAS to final receipt. Funds on a requisition that is partially received in IAS cannot be deobligated.

https://ias.usda.gov/Downloads/Receiver/Create_Full_Receipt_For_Goods-Services.pdf

If you have any questions regarding IAS, please feel free to contact Angelia Fleming Loggie, REE IAS Agency Lead on 301-504-1730, or via e-mail at angelia.flemingloggie@ars.usda.gov.

National Administrative Officer Conference

Question: SPA LAO's are interested in any new information on the National AO Conference planned for December 2007.

Response:

The Conference is still on for the week of December 3, 2007, in Savannah, GA. The conference planning committee is meeting this week at Headquarters in Beltsville to finalize all the arrangements (i.e., agenda, ask the experts sessions, breakout sessions, etc.) More detailed information will follow shortly after the team meeting.

LAO Position Description

Question: Are all LAO's being promoted across the board to a GS-12? Purchasing Agents going to a GS-7? Accounting Technicians?

Response:

There is no intention to make all LAO's GS-12, or to promote any positions across the board, i.e., Purchasing Agents, Accounting Technicians, etc.

AFM is in the process of establishing a standard position description for LAO's that will more accurately reflect the duties, responsibilities, and performance expectations of the position.

Additional Comments – Mr. Wilburn informed the group that the AFMC has established a team to review the AgLearn process.

Round Robin Discussion

Meeting Adjourned

Minutes and Highlights submitted by: Kathleen Townson, April 24, 2007, 5:00 p.m.