

**Acquisition and Financial Assistance  
Management Review**

**United States Department of the Interior  
[Bureau/Office]  
[Bureau/Office Region Reviewed]**

**United States  
Department of the Interior  
[Bureau/Office]  
[Date of Report Issuance]**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The following acquisition management review (AMR) was announced by memorandum to [identify] from [identify] on \_\_\_\_\_. An on-site review was conducted in [identify location] during the week of [identify period in which on-site review was conducted] by the following Bureau/Office staff:

An exit briefing providing preliminary findings was held between the review team and [identify] on [date].

The review team gratefully acknowledges the support provided to it throughout the review by [identify Bureau/Office/Regional management, and contracting communities, etc.].

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In this section, please provide a brief one to one-and-half page summary of the overall findings of the review and some overall corrective actions, as appropriate. The summary must be concise and findings discussed in terms of the broad framework categories. For example, for acquisition, highlight any major findings in the following four areas:

- Organizational Alignment and Leadership;
- Policies and Processes;
- Human Capital; and
- Knowledge and Information Management

Just a sentence or two describing your findings in each area will be sufficient to give reviewers a “snapshot” of what you looked at; what you found; and any suggested corrective action recommendations, and/or commendations, etc. that you have to offer.



## SUMMARY RATINGS BY FRAMEWORK COMPONENT

**Rating Key:**

**Blue** = Superior performance: Best practice for effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance.

**Green** = Satisfactory performance: Function operates effectively, efficiently, and in a compliant manner. Reasonable assurance exists that internal control objectives are being achieved.

**Yellow** (Yellow) = Conditions exist that affect function's effectiveness, efficiency and/or compliance, and overall achievement of internal control objectives.

**Red** = Overall function lacks effectiveness and efficiency. Significant level of risk to successful operations. Little reasonable assurance that internal control objectives are being achieved.

Acquisition	Rating
<b>Organizational Alignment and Leadership</b>	[Identify Color] <input type="radio"/>
<b>Policies and Processes</b>	[Identify Color] <input type="radio"/>
<b>Human Capital</b>	[Identify Color] <input type="radio"/>
<b>Knowledge and Information Management</b>	[Identify Color] <input type="radio"/>

## **BUREAU and REGION ACQUISITION PROFILE**

In the following section, provide a brief overview of the bureau, its mission, and its overall acquisition transaction activity. This sets the context for your regional office review. For example:

Established by the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1, 2, 3, and 4), commonly referred to as the National Park Service Organic Act, the National Park Service's (NPS or Service) mission is to:

Conserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. (Part 145, Chapter 1, Departmental Manual (DM))

Annually, there are an estimated 271 million visits to NPS's 390 units which include parks, monuments, seashore sites, battlefields and other cultural and recreational sites. Its FY 2006 budget, as enacted, is over \$X.X billion.

In Fiscal Year (FY) XXXX, new definitive NPS procurement awards, as reported to the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation (FPDS-NG), exceeded \$XXX million, more than XX percent of DOI's over \$X.X billion in procurement obligations. The new definitive actions (i.e., excludes follow-on actions, modifications) accounted for over XX percent (XXXXX actions) of the Department's 62,493 total actions awarded.

As reported to FPDS-NG, in FY's 2003 through 2005, the top products/services (as measured by total dollars awarded) acquired by NPS included (please see Appendix for detailed Servicewide and Regional acquisition profiles for the same period):

- Commercial and Institutional Building Construction
- Water, Sewer, and Pipeline Construction
- Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction
- All Other Heavy Construction

As of April 2006, NPS employees held an estimated XX percent (XXX warrants) of the over XX,XXX contracting officer's warrants issued Departmentwide.

Next, provide similar information focusing on the particular regional office that you are reviewing, e.g., states covered, number of parks, refuges, field offices, transaction and warrant data, any unique requirements.

## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 1 - ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Organizational Alignment and Leadership

**ELEMENT:** Aligning Acquisition with Bureau's/Region's Missions and Needs

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** "The end goal of organizational alignment is to ensure that the acquisition function enables the agency to meet its overall missions and needs. The acquisition function needs proper management support and visibility within the organization to meet that goal."

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

- A. Assuring Appropriate Placement of the Acquisition Function
- B. Organizing the Acquisition Function to Operate Strategically
- C. Clearly Defining and Integrating Roles and Responsibilities

**OBSERVATION:**

A. Assuring Appropriate Placement of the Acquisition Function

In this section you must basically assess whether the current placement of the acquisition function meets the organization's needs, vis-à-vis acquiring needed goods and services, supporting strategic decision making, and ultimately contributing to the region's and bureau's overall business performance. Consider: Is the acquisition function fragmented? Is it in a position where it can plan and provide strategic support to the bureau/region? Is it seen (and used) as an administrative support function rather than a business partner in supporting mission needs?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The acquisition function has been assigned the appropriate degree of responsibility and authority for strategic planning, management, and oversight of the region's purchases of goods and services, and this responsibility is consistent with the significance of acquisition to the bureau's and region's mission.
- + Regional management views the acquisition function as a strategic asset in support of core mission and business processes.
- + Regional management and staff view the acquisition function as a business partner rather than a support function.
- + Acquisition of goods and services is viewed from a bureau and/or agency-wide perspective. Acquisition is planned from a corporate perspective rather than on a transaction-by-transaction basis.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Disconnects exist between where the acquisition function is placed in the region's hierarchy and its actual role in achieving the bureau's missions or supporting its operations.
- ↓ Lack of coordination across the region's contracting activity results in redundancy, inconsistency, and an inability to leverage resources to meet common or shared requirements.

↓ The acquisition function is viewed merely as an administrative support function rather than as a business partner.

## B. Organizing the Acquisition Function to Operate Strategically

How a region organizes and manages its acquisition function affects its ability to operate strategically. Fragmented business units tend to reduce the quality and consistency of overall bureau or corporate support. Consider: Does the region make appropriate use of technology and to reduce fragmentation? Is the number of contracting officer's appointments in the region appropriate? Does support to field units overly extend the regional office staff's workload? Could goods and services be acquired more efficiently through a more strategic or corporate approach? Are acquisition-related performance plans and metrics established, understood, and realized in a consistent manner within the region? Have there been recent changes within the bureau affecting the region's acquisition function, e.g., new requirements, budget, workforce, technology? Does the acquisition staff see itself as an active contributor to regional and bureau mission support?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

### **Look for:**

- + The acquisition function's mission is well-defined and its goals and strategies are consistent with and support the bureau's overall mission.
- + The current structure of the acquisition function has been assessed and appropriate changes made in response to changes, such as in the missions, operating environment, budget, workforce, or technology.
- + Outcome-oriented performance measures are used to assess the success of the acquisition function.

### **Beware of:**

- ↓ Regional leadership lacks a clear definition or understanding of the acquisition function's mission, goals, or strategies, and/or its potential as a business partner.
- ↓ The bureau and/or region has not assessed or made changes to the role of the acquisition function in response to significant changes. There is no "continuous review" or trend analysis to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.
- ↓ Performance measures are not used to evaluate the usefulness of the acquisition function to support regional and bureau-wide mission.

## C. Clearly Defining and Integrating Roles and Responsibilities

As stated in the GAO framework:

An acquisition function that is successful at effectively and efficiently meeting the agency's missions generally reflects a consistent, cross-functional, and multi-disciplinary approach. This approach requires engagement by all relevant stakeholders, including representatives from program offices, contracting officials, financial managers, human capital officials, information technology officials, and other appropriate participants. An integrated approach helps agencies better define their needs and identify, select, and manage providers of goods and services.

Agency management at each level of the organization is responsible for development of an environment that encourages the establishment of interaction and effective communication among disciplines. Consider: Are there organizational “stovepipes” within the region and/or within its acquisition function that inhibit effective coordination with customers/stakeholders? Does the acquisition function clearly understand and articulate its role and potential in supporting mission-critical functions to management, program offices, and peers in finance, human capital, IT, and other disciplines? Are the acquisition function’s roles and responsibilities clear and understood by its customers/stakeholders, e.g., contracting officer’s role in selecting the proper contractual instrument and procurement approach? How active is the acquisition function in advance planning of regional requirements?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Each stakeholder in the acquisition process has clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- + There is a shared understanding of each participant’s role in acquisition activities.
- + Acquisition managers support the bureau’s/region’s strategic-planning and decision-making needs.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ The acquisition function’s role is unclear.
- ↓ Acquisition and other bureau/regional offices do not clearly communicate and cooperate.
- ↓ There is little integration of acquisition planning among the different regional entities with a role in acquisitions.
- ↓ Conflicts among stakeholders are left unresolved, thereby resulting in inefficient operations.
- ↓ The acquisition office is frequently bypassed.

**RATING for Aligning Acquisition with Bureau’s/Region’s Missions and Needs:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the *three* critical success factors that make up the element, Aligning Acquisition with Bureau’s Missions and Needs, i.e., Assuring Appropriate Placement of the Acquisition Function; Organizing the Acquisition Function to Operate Strategically; and Clearly Defining and Integrating Roles and Responsibilities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 1 below.



## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 2-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Organizational Alignment and Leadership

**ELEMENT:** Commitment from Leadership

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “Leaders have the responsibility to set the corporate agenda, define and communicate the organization’s values and culture, and remove barriers that block organizational changes.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

- A. Clear, Strong, and Ethical Executive Leadership
- B. Effective Communications and Continuous Improvement

**OBSERVATION:**

A. Clear, Strong, and Ethical Executive Leadership

In this section you assess the acquisition function’s direct support from, and access to regional leadership in mitigating risk and promoting acquisition’s role as a strategic business resource in accomplishing mission requirements.

Consider: Is the acquisition function’s expertise fragmented through assignments and responsibilities in a variety of non-related areas? Does regional management set a tone that recognizes the unique contributions that the acquisition function can make to regional decision making? Are assignments and duties properly separated? (The collateral duty environment may lend itself to a higher degree of risk because clear lines of responsibility/separation of functions are obscured.) Does regional management support bureau-wide acquisition initiatives? Does regional management have a positive and supportive attitude towards internal controls to identify and mitigate risk? Are field level acquisition activities reviewed in accordance with Departmental policy? Are corrective action plans for field-level activities developed, implemented, and monitored?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Senior regional leadership provides direction and vision, facilitates the development of common processes and approaches, and is involved in identifying and assessing risks associated with meeting acquisition objectives.
- + Senior regional leadership promotes a strategic, integrated, and regional/bureau-wide approach to acquisition.
- + Senior leadership and management set a positive and supportive attitude toward internal control.
- + Senior leadership and management support monitoring to assess the quality of internal control performance and to ensure that issues are promptly resolved.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Senior regional leadership has not defined a common direction or vision for the acquisition function.
- ↓ Senior regional leadership does not continually support efforts to develop common processes and approaches.
- ↓ Senior regional leadership has not comprehensively identified and mitigated risks, e.g., through establishment and monitoring of internal controls.
- ↓ Regional personnel do not understand the importance of developing and implementing good internal controls.

**B. Effective Communications and Continuous Improvement**

Management needs to effectively communicate to employees the bureau's/region's missions, values and expectations for the acquisition function. For this section, consider: Are meaningful metrics used to measure the effectiveness of the regional acquisition function (including field level activities) and to provide the foundation for continuous improvement? Does management communicate its expectations for the acquisition function? Does regional leadership facilitate and support clear lines of communication among all parties? Have regional personnel been asked for their views on the effectiveness of this communication? Have stakeholders been asked for their views on the effectiveness of the existing acquisition process and areas needing improvement?

Are control activities (i.e., the policies, procedures and mechanisms in place to address or mitigate risk and help ensure internal control objectives are met ) an integral part of the bureau's/region's planning, implementation, review, and accountability activities to ensure results and proper stewardship of government resources? Does the bureau and/or region continuously monitor control activities for their effectiveness at ensuring acquisition objectives are met?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Metrics used by leadership are targeted at demonstrating the impact and value of the acquisition function and provide useful feedback to identify areas for improvement.
- + Management expectations for acquisition are clearly and periodically communicated within the region.
- + Processes are in place to continuously gather stakeholder feedback regarding the effectiveness of the acquisition process and identify areas needing improvement.
- + Control activities are an integral part of the bureau's/region's planning, implementation, review, and accountability activities to ensure results and proper stewardship of assets.
- + Control activities are continuously monitored for their effectiveness at ensuring acquisition objectives are met.

**In preparing your findings for this section, be sure to review acquisition transaction files to ensure that regulations, policies, clauses/provisions, technological processes and procedures are being implemented properly and timely. Also review field level review reports and their related corrective action plans to ensure that control activities such as reviews are given proper management attention and support, and that risk, once identified is being mitigated through corrective action.**

**Beware of:**

- ↓ There is inadequate communication from regional leadership regarding the effectiveness of the acquisition function and how it supports the bureau's/region's missions.
- ↓ There is no mechanism in place for stakeholders to provide suggestions for improvements to the acquisition process.
- ↓ Little change is made to acquisition processes based on the needs and concerns expressed by affected parties.
- ↓ Internal control monitoring (e.g., peer review, checklists, acquisition management reviews) does not occur in the course of normal operations, is not performed continually, and is not ingrained in the region's operations.
- ↓ The region has inadequate policies, procedures, techniques, and mechanisms in place to ensure effective implementation of agency and bureau management directives.
- ↓ The region has not implemented a program to continuously measure and assess the acquisition function's performance in supporting bureau/regional missions or achieving acquisition goals.
- ↓ Performance measures are in place but are not consistently utilized or communicated.

**RATING for Commitment from Leadership:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the *two* critical success factors that make up the element, Commitment from Leadership, i.e., Clear, Strong, and Ethical Executive Leadership, and Effective Communications and Continuous Improvement.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 2 below.



## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 3-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Policies and Processes

**ELEMENT:** Planning Strategically

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “Planning strategically requires attention to the larger context within which acquisitions occur. First, it requires identifying and managing relationships among the parties involved in the acquisition process. Second, sufficient attention should be given to analyzing aggregate agency/bureau/regional needs and devising strategic acquisition plans to meet those needs. Acquisition planning should also take into consideration the effects of the appropriations process and other external factors on the timing and execution of major contracts.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

- A. Partnering with Internal Organizations
- B. Assessing Internal Requirements and the Impact of External Events

**OBSERVATION:**

A. Partnering with Internal Organizations

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 7.102 requires agencies to perform acquisition planning and conduct market research for all acquisitions in order to promote and provide for: (1) acquisition of commercial items to the extent suitable; and (2) full and open competition to the maximum extent practicable. Section 7.102(b) states that:

This planning shall integrate the efforts of all personnel responsible for significant aspects of the acquisition. The purpose of this planning is to ensure that the Government meets its needs in the most effective, economical, and timely manner.

In this section you assess the strength of the acquisition function’s engagement with stakeholders from various disciplines, e.g., finance, legal, program offices, and other appropriate participants in identifying needs and planning acquisitions in a timely manner that allows for appropriate competition and the acquisition of commercial solutions. Are roles and responsibilities defined clearly? Does the acquisition community provide well informed business guidance to project managers? Is acquisition concentrating on individual and possibly redundant transactions rather than taking a strategic approach to identifying repetitive requirements and leveraging buying power?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Acquisition planning and strategy development support the bureau/region’s missions rather than focus on the needs of individual units/transactions.
- + Stakeholders work on an ongoing basis to define key business and acquisition drivers to understand each other’s needs.
- + The bureau/region has structures in place that require appropriate coordination among stakeholders developing and implementing acquisition strategies.

+ Management encourages and supports appropriate and timely coordination among stakeholders in acquisition planning.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ There is no active and ongoing involvement between acquisition and stakeholders.
- ↓ There is little evidence of advance acquisition planning.
- ↓ Stakeholders do not clearly communicate their needs or work together to identify solutions.
- ↓ Lack of integration across the acquisition function results in redundancy, inconsistency, and an inability to leverage resources to meet shared requirements.
- ↓ Acquisition and financial management officials do not partner to develop a shared vision.

**B. Assessing Internal Requirements and the Impact of External Events**

Successful acquisition strategies require sufficient attention to analyzing agency/bureauwide/regional needs. Past acquisitions should be reviewed to identify trends and opportunities for consolidating similar acquisitions planned in the coming year to leverage buying power and reduce administrative burdens. Acquisition planning should take into consideration the effects of the appropriations process on the timing and execution of major contracts.

Additionally, contracting personnel must be aware of agency/bureau strategic plans, congressional mandates, socioeconomic policy objectives, and other factors. Acquisition processes should also be sufficiently flexible to address unforeseen external events and emergencies, e.g., fires, hurricanes, etc. In this section, you assess the acquisition function's success in monitoring and effectively using transaction data, strategic planning, and awareness of external factors and requirements and the ability to work with them.

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Adequate and relevant data are available and used to make strategic acquisition plans and decisions.
- + The acquisition function considers recurring purchases and develops or participates in bureau/departmentwide acquisition plans that best leverage these acquisitions.
- + The region identifies opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses and consistently achieves socioeconomic goals.
- + Acquisition plans are current and reflect anticipated budgetary resources.
- + There is an awareness of current and pending legislation, policy, and plans and their potential implications on the acquisition function.
- + The acquisition function has assessed and incorporated changes, as appropriate, to enable its acquisition processes to better respond to unforeseen external events and emergencies.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ There is little evidence of strategic and advance acquisition planning. Acquisition planning is completed on a contract-by-contract basis rather than with consideration of bureauwide/regional needs.
- ↓ Data is not periodically monitored or analyzed for acquisition planning and decision making.
- ↓ Frequent emergency or sole-source purchases are made to meet routine or recurring needs.
- ↓ Function fails to achieve socioeconomic goals.

↓ The function is ill-equipped to purchase goods and services needed to respond to emergency situations.

**RATING for Planning Strategically:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the *two* critical success factors that make up the element, Planning Strategically, i.e., Partnering with Internal Organizations, and Assessing Internal Requirements and the Impact of External Events.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 3 below.

## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 4-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Policies and Processes

**ELEMENT:** Effectively Managing the Acquisition Process

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “The role of the acquisition function does not end with the award of contracts. Acquisitions that help the bureau meet its needs require continued involvement throughout contract implementation and close-out. In other words, bureau processes need to ensure that contracted goods and services will be delivered according to the schedule, cost, quality, and quantity specified in the contract. Factors that can help a bureau effectively manage its acquisition process include empowering cross-functional teams, managing and engaging external suppliers, providing effective monitoring and oversight, and implementing sound financial accountability measures.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

- A. Empowering Cross-Functional Teams
- B. Managing and Engaging Suppliers
- C. Monitoring and Providing Oversight to Achieve Desired Outcomes
- D. Enabling Financial Accountability

**OBSERVATION:**

A. Empowering Cross-Functional Teams

In this section you assess the function’s use of cross-functional teams with the right mix of knowledge, technical expertise, and credibility to help better define their needs and identify, select, and manage providers of goods and services, which in turn helps ensure that users’ needs are met at the lowest cost to the organization. Teams generally include representatives from acquisition, internal users of goods and services, and the budget or finance office. They are responsible for analyzing spend data, identifying and prioritizing potential opportunities for more detailed review, defining internal needs and requirements, and conducting market research. This process is vital to the capital planning and performance-based acquisition processes.

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The function uses cross-functional teams to plan for and manage projects. These teams develop a project plan to implement projects effectively.
- + Project performance is systematically monitored, and controls and incentives are established for accountability, e.g., Earned Value Management.
- + Contracting Officers Representatives’ training is current.
- + Contracting Officers Representatives work closely with the contracting officer.
- + Open, honest, and clear communication is encouraged among all parties including team members, program officials, and contractors.



**Beware of:**

- ↓ The function makes limited use of cross-functional teams.
- ↓ The acquisition function does not effectively participate as a member of Integrated Project Teams, or feel empowered to contribute to project team decisions.
- ↓ Contracting Officers Representatives are not adequately trained.
- ↓ Contracting Officers Representatives and contracting officers do not communicate on an ongoing basis throughout the project/contract's period of performance.
- ↓ Project performance is not systematically monitored, and controls and incentives are not established for accountability, e.g., Earned Value Management.

**B. Managing and Engaging Suppliers**

One of the 24 initiatives under the President's Management Agenda's E-Gov program, the Integrated Acquisition Environment provides Government contracting personnel with ample opportunity to conduct on-line market research and monitor suppliers through tools including the Central Contractor Registration (CCR); the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS), that provides timely and pertinent contractor past performance information to the Federal acquisition community for use in making source selection decisions; the Excluded Parties Lists System (EPLS), which identifies those parties excluded throughout the U.S. Government (unless otherwise noted) from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, or financial assistance; FedBizOpps.gov, the single government point-of-entry for Federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business opportunities by posting information directly to FedBizOpps via the Internet. FedBizOpps (FBO) is also used by commercial vendors seeking Federal markets for their products and services by searching, monitoring, and retrieving opportunities solicited by the entire Federal contracting community; and the On-line Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) designed to replace the paper based Representations and Certifications (Reps and Certs) process.

In this section you assess the acquisition function's awareness and use of these tools to identify suppliers and manage supplier relationships thereby encouraging competition, enhanced price analysis, contractor quality and performance. In addition, consideration must be given to past performance evaluation and reporting processes, and processes in place for soliciting and evaluating contractor feedback.

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The bureau/region trains its acquisition personnel on how to manage supplier relationships.
- + Past performance evaluations are routinely prepared and reviewed.
- + The function has established an effective communication and feedback system with its suppliers.
- + The acquisition staff effectively utilizes Integrated Acquisition Environment tools in conducting market research, soliciting competition, and making contracting decisions.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Knowledge of suppliers/contractors is not shared across the contracting activity.

- ↓ The function continues to select the same suppliers without periodically assessing whether the goods and services offered are competitive in terms of price, quality, and performance.
- ↓ The acquisition staff lacks the skills, knowledge, and expertise to manage supplier relationships effectively.
- ↓ The acquisition staff does not effectively use Integrated Acquisition Environment tools in conducting market research, soliciting competition, and making contracting decisions.
- ↓ Past performance evaluations are not routinely prepared and reviewed.

### C. Monitoring and Providing Oversight to Achieve Desired Outcomes

In this section you assess the quality of acquisition function's oversight processes. Consider: What tools, processes, and controls does the function use to ensure effective oversight of contractor performance and of employees making purchases? Are the roles and responsibilities of those who perform contract management and oversight clearly defined?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The bureau has undertaken, and the region has implemented a workforce-planning effort to ensure that individuals who award, manage, and monitor contracts have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and have appropriate workload, skills, and training to perform their jobs effectively.
- + Processes are in place to effectively track and monitor contractor performance.
- + The acquisition oversight process is regularly reviewed, areas needing improvement are identified, and corrective action plans are established and implemented. For example, are field level reviews conducted in accordance with agency requirements? Are commonalities among review findings analyzed and bureauwide/regional corrective actions taken?

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Personnel responsible for contract management have skills and knowledge gaps that inhibit their ability to properly oversee the types of contracts used.
- ↓ There are no processes in place for monitoring whether contracts meet cost, schedule, performance, and quality requirements.
- ↓ The bureau/region acquisition function does not assign clear roles and responsibilities for overseeing contracts.
- ↓ The acquisition oversight process is not regularly reviewed; areas needing improvement are not properly identified; and corrective action plans are not consistently established and implemented.

### D. Enabling Financial Accountability

Throughout the acquisition process, financial information should be tracked and communicated in a way that enables effective evaluation and assessment of acquisition activities. When financial data are not useful, relevant, timely, or reliable, the acquisition function - as well as other functions across an organization - are at risk of inefficient or wasteful business practices.

IDEAS, FPDS-NG, and the CCR were designed to and, when properly used, can provide acquisition staffs with access to critical financial and vendor information. IDEAS has a financial interface that eliminates the need for independent entry of the same data by acquisition and







financial staffs. In this section you assess the acquisition function's access to, and most importantly, use of financial information.

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The acquisition workforce has ready access and uses information on obligated and expended funds, with sufficient information to assure proper oversight and accounting at the contract level.
- + Entries are made to the financial management system by appropriate personnel that update the contract management and property accountability systems.
- + The bureau/region reports frequently enough to ensure accountability in the acquisition function.
- + Adjustments to contract accounting records are clearly reported and accurate; such adjustments represent a low percentage of financial transactions.
- + Erroneous and improper payments and cost overruns are tracked and are not a significant problem.
- + Contracting and financial officials take appropriate corrective action when contractors are not meeting expectations for cost, schedule, or performance.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Acquisition and financial management staff lacks access or fails to effectively use critical information, including fiscal year; appropriation/Treasury fund symbol; organization code; cost center; object classification; estimated amount; project code; program code; transaction date; action code; subject-to-funds availability indicator; asset identifier code; contractor code/name; award date; and amounts increased and/or decreased.
- ↓ Acquisition and financial management staff independently update the same types of data into independent financial and contract management systems. Standard systems are not used.
- ↓ Inadequate transaction processing, particularly improper payments, occur frequently.
- ↓ Failure to properly capture and identify taxpayer identification number for contractor identification and incoming reporting and debt collection purposes.
- ↓ Critical information is not being captured, and duplicative actions on the part of acquisition and financial management staffs are required to independently update data into the various systems thereby significantly increasing the probability of erroneous data entry.

**RATING for Effectively Managing the Acquisition Process:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the *four* critical success factors that make up the element, Effectively Managing the Acquisition Process, i.e., Empowering Cross-Functional Teams; Managing and Engaging Suppliers; Monitoring and Providing Oversight to Achieve Desired Outcomes; and Enabling Financial Accountability.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 4 below

## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 5-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Policies and Processes

**ELEMENT:** Promoting Successful Outcomes of Major Projects

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “The Federal government spends billions of dollars each year on major physical capital investment projects and to research, develop, and produce large custom projects. Capital investments and custom projects are generally expensive, span multiple years, and are crucial to the agency’s strategy. Capital investments therefore usually require more analysis, support, and review than projects that cost less, have shorter time frames, or have less agencywide impact. Particular attention must be given to these long-term, capital-intensive projects.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

Using Sound Capital Investment Strategies

**OBSERVATION:**

In this section, assess the bureau’s capital planning processes and the bureau’s/regional acquisition function’s role in it.

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The bureau has a capital planning and investment program that recognizes the acquisition function’s role and responsibility in project management.
- + The acquisition staff actively participates as a member of bureau/regional program Integrated Project Teams.
- + The acquisition staff develops the Acquisition Strategies used in the bureau’s/region’s project business cases.
- + Contracting officers monitor contractor implementation of FAR Earned Value Management requirements.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ The bureau does not have a capital planning and investment program that recognizes the acquisition function’s role and responsibility in project management.
- ↓ The acquisition staff does not participate as a member of bureau/regional program Integrated Project Teams.
- ↓ The Acquisition Strategies used in the bureau’s/region’s project business cases are developed without appropriate coordination with the acquisition function.
- ↓ Contracting officers do not monitor contractor implementation of FAR Earned Value Management requirements.

**RATING for Promoting Successful Outcomes of Major Projects:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment of the critical success

factor that makes up the element, Promoting Successful Outcomes of Major Projects, i.e., Using Sound Capital Investment Strategies.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 5 below.

## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 6-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Human Capital

**ELEMENT:** Valuing and Investing in the Acquisition Workforce

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “Successful acquisition efforts depend on agency leadership and management valuing and investing in the acquisition workforce.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

Commitment to Human Capital Management

**OBSERVATION:**

In this section you assess bureau/regional management’s commitment to valuing and investing in its acquisition workforce. Consider: Are Governmentwide acquisition workforce training and education standards upheld within the bureau/region? Do acquisition-related performance standards and expectations cascade throughout the contracting activity? Are senior bureau/regional leaders and managers held accountable for effectively managing the acquisition workforce?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Acquisition officials play a significant role in developing the bureau’s/region’s overall human capital strategy and ensure that it reflects the goals of the acquisition function.
- + Acquisition officials develop, implement, and evaluate human capital approaches designed to ensure accountability, meet customer needs, and improve overall business performance.
- + Acquisition officials collaborate with and secure the support of managers at all levels for human capital approaches.
- + Acquisition officials are held accountable for managing the acquisition workforce effectively.
- + Acquisition employees are provided with resources for continuous learning efforts, competency-based appraisal systems, and retention and reward programs.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Leadership views people as costs rather than as assets.
- ↓ Bureau/regional leadership makes decisions about the workforce without considering how the decisions affect mission accomplishment, e.g., contracting officer’s appointments, workload.
- ↓ Bureau/Regional leadership and management are not held accountable for effectively managing the acquisition workforce.
- ↓ Business decisions proceed without consideration of human capital needs they entail or human capital approaches necessary for success.
- ↓ Acquisition-related performance standards and expectations do not cascade throughout the contracting activity.

**RATING for Valuing and Investing in the Acquisition Workforce:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the critical success

factor that makes up Valuing and Investing in the Acquisition Workforce, i.e., Commitment to Human Capital Management.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 6 below.



## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 7-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Human Capital

**ELEMENT:** Strategic Human Capital Planning

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “By focusing on recruiting, hiring, training, and professional development, strategic workforce planning outlines ways to help the agency fill gaps in knowledge, skills, and abilities.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

- A. Integration and Alignment
- B. Data-Driven Human Capital Decisions

**OBSERVATION:**

A. Integration and Alignment

In this section you assess bureau/regional office success in developing strategic human capital plans that incorporate the needs of the acquisition function. Consider, at the field and regional levels do managers recruit, hire, and manage their contracting support in a unit-centric human capital approach that does not allow for consideration of how well the unit’s contracting function supports Governmentwide qualification requirements or agency-/bureauwide goals or strategies? Or does the region develop or follow a corporate approach to recruiting, hiring, and managing its contracting support?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The region follows comprehensive agency/bureauwide workforce planning efforts.
- + The bureau/region has developed strategies for recruiting, retaining, and developing acquisition staff, including performance measures to evaluate the contribution these strategies make in supporting the agency’s/bureau’s/region’s acquisition function and achieving its mission and goals.
- + The bureau/region has inventoried its acquisition workforce and has identified current and future weaknesses and needs in acquisition skills.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ There is no evidence that the bureau/region recognizes the link between its human capital approaches and organizational performance objectives.
- ↓ The bureau/region/field unit adopts human capital approaches without considering how well they support organizational and acquisition goals and strategies or how these approaches may be interrelated.

B. Data-Driven Human Capital Decisions

In this section you assess the adequacy of data and the effectiveness with which it is used in making human capital decisions related to the acquisition workforce. Consider: Who is included

in the acquisition workforce? How does the bureau/region track data on its acquisition workforce? How does the bureau/region determine the appropriate size of its acquisition workforce? What training and professional certifications have current acquisition employees attained? How does the bureau/region track the acquisition staff's workload?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Data on the bureau's/region's acquisition workforce are reflected in strategic workforce-planning documents.
- + Data are available on staff development, including the number of people receiving training; and money spent on training. Acquisition workforce data are used for planning and decision making.
- + The bureau/region uses data to evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of training and development programs.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Bureau/regional officials lack or do not use critical information with which to create a profile of the acquisition workforce or to evaluate the effectiveness of human capital approaches.
- ↓ Data is not used to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of training and development programs.

**RATING for Strategic Human Capital Planning:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the *two* critical success factors that make up the element, Strategic Human Capital Planning, i.e., Integration and Alignment, and Data-Driven Human Capital Decisions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 7 below.

## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 8-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Human Capital

**ELEMENT:** Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “Recent trends in hiring and retirements in the federal government will leave many agencies with workforce imbalances in terms of skills, knowledge, and experience. Without sufficient attention given to acquiring, developing, and retaining talent, federal agencies could lose a significant portion of their contracting knowledge base.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

Targeted Investments in People

**OBSERVATION:**

Targeted Investments in People

In this section you assess the adequacy of the bureau’s/region’s investment in and enhancing the value of their acquisition staff. Investing in training for the acquisition workforce is critical to ensuring adequate oversight of the quality, cost, and timeliness of goods and services delivered by third parties.

Consider: Does the bureau/region have a method for determining the appropriate level of spending on training, recruiting, and retention efforts? Are individual training plans established for all employees? Is continuous learning emphasized? Do managers consistently provide resources to support training and development priorities for the acquisition staff? Does the acquisition function have a succession plan?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + The bureau/region has prioritized the most important training initiatives and secured top-level commitment to providing resources to implement the initiatives.
- + Goals, expectations, and criteria for investments in human capital development are clearly defined, transparent, consistently applied, and based on expected improvement in results.
- + Bureau/regional training investments are monitored and evaluated for effectiveness.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Training and other human capital expenditures are minimized rather than viewed as an investment.
- ↓ Funding decision are made without clearly defined objectives or adequate consideration of how they will impact the workforce.
- ↓ The bureau/region does not establish priorities, provide adequate funding, or track investments in human capital.
- ↓ Individual training plans are not established for all employees.
- ↓ Little or no evidence of succession planning.



**RATING for Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the critical success factor that makes up the element Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent, i.e., Targeted Investments in People.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 8 below.

## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 9-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Human Capital

**ELEMENT:** Creating Results-Oriented Organizational Cultures

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “Leading organizations foster a work environment in which people are empowered and motivated to contribute to continuous learning and mission accomplishment.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

- A. Empowerment and Inclusiveness
- B. Unit and Individual Performance Linked to Organizational Goals

**OBSERVATION:**

A. Empowerment and Inclusiveness

In this section you assess bureau/regional management’s success in getting acquisition employees at all levels of the organization involved in the planning process to develop mission goals and objectives from a front-line perspective. Consider: Does management seek ideas from the acquisition workforce? Do employees feel a sense of ownership about policies and procedures? Do managers involve employees when planning and sharing acquisition performance information? Has the bureau/region established a communication strategy to create shared expectations about the acquisition function and to report progress?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Bureau/regional management obtains employees’ ideas, involves employees in planning and sharing acquisition performance information, and incorporates employee feedback into new policies and procedures.
- + Bureau/region has established a communication strategy to create shared expectations about the acquisition function and to report progress.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Employee ideas are not sought by bureau/regional management and employees are not involved in planning and sharing acquisition performance information within the bureau/region.
- ↓ Employees do not feel a sense of ownership about policies and procedures.
- ↓ Bureau/region has not established a communication strategy to create shared expectations about the acquisition function and to report progress.

B. Unit and Individual Performance Linked to Organizational Goals

In this section you assess whether acquisition employee performance plan metrics are clear and consistent, and provide a “line of sight” between individual activities, organizational requirements, e.g., A-123 compliance, Government/agency/bureau management initiatives, and

organizational results. For example, do senior management performance requirements cascade to employee performance plans in a clear and consistent manner?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Individual performance expectations are aligned with organizational and cross-cutting goals.
- + Performance information is routinely used to track and plan follow-up actions to address organizational priorities.
- + Meaningful distinctions in performance are made.
- + Roles and responsibilities are defined and enable staff to maintain a consistent focus on programmatic priorities even during organizational transitions.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ Performance expectations are not aligned with organizational goals.
- ↓ The bureau/region does not use performance information to track progress at meeting organizational priorities.

**RATING for Creating Results-Oriented Organizational Cultures:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the *two* critical success factors that make up the element, Creating Results-Oriented Organizational Cultures, i.e., Empowerment and Inclusiveness; and Unit and Individual Performance Linked to Organizational Goals.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 9 below.

## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD 10-ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Knowledge and Information Management

**ELEMENT:** Identifying Data and Technology that Support Acquisition Management Decisions

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “Leading organizations gather and analyze data to identify opportunities to reduce costs, improve service levels, measure compliance with supplier agreements, and provide better management of service providers. Information systems help managers learn how much is being spent with which service provider and for what supplies or services. Additionally, data collected in support of meaningful metrics can assist agencies track achievements in comparison with plans, goals, and objectives. They can also allow agencies to analyze differences between actual performance and planned results. Generating meaningful data, however, requires good data stewardship.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

Tracking Acquisition Data; Translating Financial Data into Meaningful Formats; and  
Analyzing Goods and Services Spending

**OBSERVATION:**

There is a wealth of acquisition data available to contracting personnel from a variety of sources (e.g., FPDS-NG, IDEAS, FFS, etc.). Some of the data provided from these sources identify what the bureau/region buys, how much it buys, and the procurement methods used. The data can be used for the following:

- Elimination of redundancies
- Identification of strategic sourcing opportunities
- Internal control monitoring purposes
- Highlighting areas where additional/supplementary training is necessary
- Workload management (office to agencywide)

In this section you assess how accurately transaction data are reported and the effectiveness with which they are used.

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Acquisition managers ensure that employees are aware of the importance of timely and accurate transaction reporting, and provide training to ensure data quality.
- + Transaction data are reported timely and accurately.
- + Transaction data is regularly monitored for accuracy and completeness.
- + Transaction data is credible, reliable, and timely, and is used to make informed decisions.
- + Contract management information tracks events throughout the life of a contract, e.g., contract award, period of performance, modifications, close-out.

- + Financial data, e.g., budgetary resources and funds availability, status of obligations and expenditures on individual contracts, outstanding purchase requests, and payments for the receipt of goods and services are readily available to stakeholders.
- + Finance executives work with acquisition executives and managers on an ongoing basis to determine business and acquisition information needed to manage and oversee the bureau's/region's missions and objectives.
- + Relevant financial information pertaining to acquisition is presented with suitable detail in an understandable format.
- + Bureau/regional contracting personnel make regular use of data and spend analysis techniques to support strategic planning efforts.
- + The bureau/region knows how much it is spending using purchase cards and has considered this information in its spend analysis.
- + The bureau/region uses a variety of information, including financial data, to conduct a spend analysis.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ The bureau/region has not collected the full set of information or data to make effective and fact-based decisions.
- ↓ Data are not current, reliable, complete, or accurate.
- ↓ The bureau/region does not make needed data accessible to decision makers; leading them to rely on informal, ad-hoc systems to make acquisition decisions.
- ↓ Measurements taken in support of metrics are not credible, leading to disagreements over numbers and the value of the assessment process.
- ↓ Financial information pertaining to acquisition is not of the proper scope, level of detail, timing, content, and presentation format to provide real value to users.
- ↓ Acquisition information received by financial management staff is not clear and understandable, impairing efficient processing of the information into management reports.
- ↓ The bureau/region does not conduct or make regular use of spend analysis.
- ↓ Spend analysis is impeded because data are not credible, reliable, or timely.
- ↓ Information is not maintained in a standardized format or is of poor quality, thus hampering efforts to use data to more effectively management goods and services spending.

**RATING for Identifying Data and Technology that Support Acquisition Management**

**Decisions:** Based on the overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the critical success fact that makes up the element, Identifying Data and Technology that Support Acquisition Management, i.e.,

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 10 below.



## ASSESSMENT OBSERVATION SUMMARY RECORD- 11 ACQUISITION

**FRAMEWORK CORNERSTONE:** Knowledge and Information Management

**ELEMENT:** Safeguarding the Integrity of Operations and Data

**ELEMENT DESCRIPTION/REFERENCE:**

**GAO Framework Standard:** “Internal controls-such as structures, policies, and procedures-promote efficiency, reduce the risk of asset loss, help ensure that financial and acquisition management systems issue reliable reports and that the organization is in compliance with laws and regulations. It is essential that acquisition management systems contain appropriate, cost-effective controls to safeguard assets, ensure accurate aggregation and reporting of information, and support the accomplishment of organizational objectives. Internal control actions and activities occur throughout a bureau’s operations and on an on-going basis. Management must balance safeguards with the need to make accessible, timely, and accurate data available to managers and others needing acquisition information.

There are two broad groupings of information systems controls that help safeguard the integrity of operations and data: general controls and application controls. Assessing general and application controls is a technical analysis and requires the assistance of persons knowledgeable in computer systems evaluation.”

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S):**

Ensuring Effective General and Application Controls, and Data Stewardship

**OBSERVATION:**

Ensuring Effective General and Application Controls and Data Stewardship

In this section you assess the bureau’s/region’s administration and monitoring of its acquisition-related data systems, as required by OMB Circular A-123.

Consider: Is acquisition system support provided as a collateral duty? Are systems and data routinely monitored for quality and reliability? Are corrective actions taken in a timely manner when areas of weakness are identified? Are system access rights closely monitored? Are redundant data and/or systems used?

In preparing your written observation for this section:

**Look for:**

- + Sufficient resources are dedicated to ensuring that users are provided with proper system support and use.
- + Systems and data are routinely monitored and tested for quality and reliability.
- + Corrective actions are taken in a timely manner to address any identified weaknesses.
- + System access rights are closely monitored.
- + The bureau’s/region’s internal controls provide reasonable assurance that data are accurate, complete, timely, and reliable.
- + Data are redundant only when necessary. Inconsistencies are eliminated.
- + Data are accessible to authorized users when needed.

**Beware of:**

- ↓ System and data reviews/tests do not take place on a routine basis.
- ↓ Insufficient support is provided to administer systems and assist users.
- ↓ Corrective actions are not taken in a timely manner to address identified weaknesses.
- ↓ System access rights are not sufficiently monitored.
- ↓ The bureau's/region's internal controls are insufficient to provide reasonable assurance that data are accurate, complete, timely, and reliable.
- ↓ Data are redundant. Inconsistencies are not eliminated.
- ↓ Data are not accessible to authorized users when needed.

**RATING for Safeguarding the Integrity of Operations and Data:** Based on overall patterns observed, assign the appropriate color code based on your assessment for the critical success factor that makes up the element, Safeguarding the Integrity of Operations and Data, i.e., Ensuring Effective General and Application Controls, and Data Stewardship

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

List your corrective action recommendations for Assessment Observation Summary Record 11 below.

## ASSESSMENT APPROACHES/REVIEW METHODOLOGY

The following internal control assessment of the [Bureau/Office/Region] acquisition function was conducted in accordance with guidance contained in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123, Management's Responsibility for Internal Control (Revised 12/21/2004), and the Government Accountability Office's Framework for Assessing the Acquisition Function at Federal Agencies.

### **A. Internal Control as Defined by Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123**

Internal control is an integral component of an organization's management that provides reasonable assurance that the following objectives are being achieved:

- Effectiveness and efficiency of program activities and operations;
- Reliable, complete, and timely data are maintained;
- Compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and
- Programs and resources are protected from waste, fraud, and mismanagement.

Internal controls are the organizations, policies, procedures, actions, and activities that management implements to ensure that goals and objectives are met. They are the tools to help managers achieve results and safeguard the integrity of their programs. Internal controls apply equally to accounting and financial management, program, operational, and administrative areas.

As revised, OMB Circular A-123 emphasizes management's responsibility for developing and maintaining internal control activities that comply with standards related to:

- **Control Environment:** The organizational structure and culture established by management and employees to sustain support for effective internal control. This includes:
  - Well defined areas of authority and responsibility;
  - Appropriate delegation of authority and responsibility throughout the organization;
  - Establishment of a suitable hierarchy for reporting;
  - Supporting appropriate human capital policies for hiring, training, evaluating, counseling, advancing, compensating and disciplining personnel; and
  - Upholding the need for personnel to possess and maintain the proper knowledge and skills to perform their assigned duties as well as understand the importance of maintaining effective internal control within the organization.
- **Risk Assessment:** Identification, analysis, and mitigation of internal and external risks that may prevent the organization from meeting its objectives.
- **Control Activities:** The policies, procedures and mechanisms in place to address or mitigate risk and help ensure internal control objectives are met, such as:
  - Proper segregation of duties and supervision;
  - Access to and accountability for resources;
  - Appropriate recording, documentation and access to that documentation;
  - General and application controls over information systems.



- **Information and Communications:** Evaluates how well information is communicated to all relevant personnel at all levels within an organization, and with interested outside organizations. Examples include:
  - Receiving updated guidance from central oversight offices;
  - Management communicating requirements to operational staff.
- **Monitoring:** An on-going function that should occur in the normal course of business. Periodic assessments should be integrated as part of management's continuous monitoring of internal control, which should be ingrained in the organization's operations.

**B. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Framework for Assessing the Acquisition Function at Federal Agencies**

Issued in September 2005, the GAO Framework for Assessing the Acquisition Function at Federal Agencies is built on a foundation of strong internal control, which serves as the first line of defense in safeguarding assets and preventing and detecting errors and weaknesses. The framework comprises four interrelated cornerstones that promote an efficient, effective, and accountable acquisition function:

- Organizational Alignment and Leadership
- Policies and Processes
- Human Capital
- Knowledge and Information Management

The framework's direct linkage to the A-123 standards identified above is apparent in the critical success factors evaluated/assessed under each of the four cornerstone areas.

- **Organizational Alignment and Leadership:**
  - Assuring appropriate placement of the acquisition function;
  - Organizing the acquisition function to operate strategically;
  - Clearly defining and integrating roles and responsibilities;
  - Clear, strong, and ethical executive leadership;
  - Effective communications and continuous improvement
- **Policies and Processes:**
  - Partnering with internal organizations;
  - Assessing internal requirements and the impact of external events;
  - Managing and engaging suppliers;
  - Monitoring and providing oversight to achieve desired outcomes;
  - Enabling financial accountability;
  - Using sound Capital Investment strategies
- **Human Capital:**
  - Commitment to human capital management;
  - Integration and alignment;
  - Data-driven human capital decisions;

- Targeted investments in people;
  - Empowerment and inclusiveness;
  - Unit and individual performance linked to organizational goals
- **Knowledge and Information Management:**
    - Tracking acquisition data;
    - Tracking financial data into meaningful formats;
    - Analyzing goods and services spending;
    - Safeguarding the integrity of operations and data stewardship

Because of its comprehensiveness and solid emphasis on compliance and organizational effectiveness, the GAO Framework has been designated by the Department's Senior Procurement Executive as the Departmental standard by which bureau acquisition functions will be evaluated in fulfilling OMB Circular A-123's requirements.

#### **D. Review Methodology/Information Sources**

In addition to OMB Circular A-123 and the framework, sources of information for conduct of this Acquisition Management Review (AMR) included: [Please list sources of information, examples provided below:]

- Bureau/office headquarters staff knowledge gained from on-going, day-to-day work with the acquisition and financial assistance functions;
- Review and analysis of acquisition data as reported to the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation (FPDS-NG) for [ period of time, e.g., FYs 2003 – 2005];
- Functional review reports for acquisition for Fiscal Years [state period];
- Review of acquisition transaction files (sample)
- U.S. Department of the Interior Annual Report on Performance and Accountability;
- U.S. Department of the Interior and/or Bureau/Office Strategic Plan;
- Departmental Manual [identify pertinent parts and chapters];
- Staffing and organization charts/descriptions for the Bureau's/Region's acquisition function;
- Contracting Officer's Appointment System/ACMIS data for the Bureau/Regional contracting function;
- Chief of Contracting Officer and staff Annual Performance Plans for [state period];
- Copies of draft and final acquisition management review reports of field level activities by Bureau/Regional Office from FY's \_\_\_\_\_;
- Pertinent Office of Inspector General and Government Accountability Office reports;
- Bureau/office directives, policies, handbooks, and descriptions of procedures involving the acquisition function; and
- Interviews with: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: [list other sources used]

### **ENDNOTES (Optional)**

Include any endnotes from the text of the report, as appropriate.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**

In the following section, repeat your recommendations as stated in each of the Assessment Observation Summary Records. Consolidating your recommendations will greatly assist the regional office in preparing its corrective action plan.

### **1. Recommendations Related to: Aligning Acquisition with Bureau's Missions and Needs**

For example:

Record 1: A.1:

Record 1: B.1:

Record 1: C.1:

Record 1: C.2:

### **2. Recommendations Related to: Commitment from Leadership**

### **3. Recommendations Related to: Planning Strategically**

### **4. Recommendations Related to: Effectively Managing the Acquisition Process**

### **5. Recommendations Related to: Promoting Successful Outcomes of Major Projects**

### **6. Recommendations Related to: Valuing and Investing in the Acquisition Workforce**

### **7. Recommendations Related to: Strategic Human Capital Planning**

### **8. Recommendations Related to: Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent**

**9. Recommendations Related to: Creating Results-Oriented Organizational Cultures**

**10. Recommendations Related to: Identifying Data and Technology that Support Acquisition Management Decisions**

**11. Recommendations Related to: Safeguarding the Integrity of Operations and Data**



**APPENDIX**

**Regional Acquisition Data Profile:  
Including Top Products/Services**

## ACQUISITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Possible questions for conducting interviews with acquisition personnel in the course of reviews are provided below.

### **Aligning Acquisition With Bureau's Missions and Needs**

1. What would you say are the top 3 to 5 challenges that you face in being a Bureau/Regional Contracting Chief?
2. What are your roles and responsibilities in your bureau?
3. Would you agree that bureau leaders, management, and staff view the acquisition function as a strategic asset in achieving their mission or supporting the bureau's operations at lowest possible cost?
4. Tell me about your annual performance plan. Does it have metrics related to acquisition efficiency, effectiveness, and results?
5. How involved is your acquisition function in your bureau's strategic planning process? Are you aware of your bureau's strategic plan goals? Are you able to address/support strategic goals through the acquisition function? Any feedback on the acquisition function's success in supporting bureau mission/goals?
6. How does your acquisition office communicate and cooperate with other bureau offices?
7. How closely does your function coordinate and integrate with your bureau's budgetary processes, human capital, financial management functions? Does upper management encourage it?
8. Tell me about your review processes. Do you use checklists? How about reviews by the Office of the Solicitor? How many reviews in your Region did you do last year? What do you do with the reviews and corrective action plans once issued? Have you issued any policies as a result of review findings? How do you prepare for reviews? Do you review Order Delegations?
9. How does bureau leadership communicate the bureau's mission, values, and guiding principles, as well as its vision and expectations for the acquisition function to bureau personnel?
10. Does bureau leadership facilitate and support clear lines of communication among all parties?

## **Policies and Processes**

11. Do end users of goods and services acquired work with your office to discuss requirements for meeting their needs? How early in the process?
12. How receptive are your stakeholders in evaluating different acquisition approaches and solutions?
13. How do you promote coordination among stakeholders as an acquisition action moves through the various steps in the process?
14. Does your bureau acquisition function systemically identify and analyze bureau acquisitions actions planned in the next 12 to 24 months? Does the acquisition function analyze data for strategic sourcing to leverage buying power?
15. Tell me about your vendor information. Do you use the Central Contractor Registration? How do you conduct market research?
16. Describe your socio-economic contracting goals and accomplishments. Describe the goaling process? How about vendor outreach activities?
17. How involved are you and your staff in your bureau's capital planning process? Do they participate as part of cross-functional teams in construction and IT projects?
18. Do you prepare past performance reports and use them in the pre-award process?
19. What, as a manager, do you do to ensure that you have adequate staff with the right skills, knowledge, and training to implement policies and processes to oversee contractors and financial assistance recipients?
20. Do you have access to, and how frequently do you use acquisition and financial information to monitor and oversee contract actions?
21. Do you have some process in place for reviewing requirements in order to choose appropriate instruments, e.g., contract, grant, cooperative agreement?

## **Human Capital**

22. How would you rate your bureau in its investment in its acquisition workforce?
23. Do you work closely with Human Resources in making staff development decisions?
24. Do you have a workforce plan for acquisition? Is the acquisition workforce included in the bureau's workforce plan?

### **Knowledge and Information Management**

25. How closely do you use and track data on contracting for internal control; to support management decision-making; spend analysis; authorizing of warrants/appointments; workforce analysis?

26. How do you find out about changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulation? E-Gov initiatives? Performance-based acquisition? Grants.gov goals? How often do you and your staff access your bureau's acquisition Inter/Intra-net site?

27. Do you use IDEAS? Electronic Commerce?