



## Special Instructions



### Understanding a Statement of Work

#### The Purpose of an SOW

A Statement of Work (SOW) is essential when purchasing commercial services. SOWs are read and interpreted by Government and industry personnel with diverse backgrounds, such as engineering, science, accounting, law, contracting, and other business fields.



#### Power Buying Tip

There are three primary objectives of the SOW:

- ▼ Be logical and readable.
- ▼ Identify and emphasize the critical elements.
- ▼ State exactly what is required — that is, the deliverables, due dates, and basic requirements — that constitute what the Contractor must do in order to receive payment.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

A performance-based SOW is written to ensure that contractors are free to determine how to meet the Government's performance objectives. Using a performance-based SOW:

- ▼ should lead to more cost-effective acquisitions and better value
- ▼ holds the contractor accountable for the end results
- ▼ maximizes contractor control of the work processes and allows for innovation in approaching various work requirements.

Your SOW should contain the following elements:

- ▼ Background
- ▼ Objectives
- ▼ Scope
- ▼ Tasks or requirements
- ▼ Selection criteria
- ▼ Deliverables or delivery schedule
- ▼ Government-furnished equipment and Government-furnished information
- ▼ Security
- ▼ Place of performance
- ▼ Period of performance.

These elements are explained on the following pages.

**Background**

- ▼ Describes the project in very general terms
- ▼ Discusses the purpose of the project — in other words, why the project is being pursued and how it relates to other projects
- ▼ Includes, as necessary, a summary of statutory authority or applicable regulations
- ▼ Provides copies of pertinent background materials, including them in a *Reference* or *Attachment*.

**Objectives**

- ▼ Provides a concise overview of the project and how the results or end products will be used
- ▼ Includes your goals and objectives.

**Scope**

- ▼ Covers the general scope of the work the contractor will be performing.

**Tasks or Requirements**

- ▼ Describes detailed work and management requirements
- ▼ Spells out more precisely what is expected of the contractor in the performance of the work.

**Selection Criteria**

- ▼ Gives selection criteria
- ▼ Identifies objective standards of acceptable performance to be provided by the contractor.

**Deliverables or Delivery Schedule**

- ▼ Describes what the contractor shall provide
- ▼ Identifies the contractor's responsibilities
- ▼ Identifies any specialized expertise and services, training, and documentation, as applicable
- ▼ **Clearly** states the deliverables required, the schedule for delivery, the quantities, and to whom they should be delivered
- ▼ Describes the delivery schedule in calendar days from the date of award
- ▼ Identifies the type of documentation (printed and electronic) to be provided, as well as those quality indicators desired by the Government.

**Government-Furnished Equipment and Government-Furnished Information**

- ▼ Identifies any Government-furnished equipment (GFE) and Government-furnished information (GFI)
- ▼ Identifies any limitations to be provided to the contractor.

**Security**

- ▼ States the appropriate security requirements, as necessary, for the work to be done

**Place of Performance**

- ▼ Specifies whether the work is to be performed at a Government site or the contractor's site

**Period of performance**

- ▼ Specifies the performance period, i.e., hours, days, weeks, or months, etc.

### **Using Oral Proposals**

Oral proposals allow you the opportunity to understand the contractor's proposals. As buying members, using oral proposals is strongly encouraged. Communication is key to ensuring you get what you need. Refer to FAR 16.505(b)(3) [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).

### **The Advantages of Oral Presentations**

- ▼ Are more like the commercial sector
- ▼ Promote efficient face-to-face communication
- ▼ Increase satisfaction
- ▼ Minimize massive technical proposals
- ▼ Decrease proposal lead-times, resulting in shorter buying time
- ▼ Reduce proposal costs significantly, including fewer protests.

### ***Language Tips for Your Statement of Work***

- ▼ Prefer simple words, phrases, and sentences.
- ▼ Be concise, precise, and consistent. Keep sentences short and to the point.
- ▼ Use active verbs.
- ▼ Avoid passive verbs.
- ▼ Avoid “should” or “may” because they leave the decision for action up to the Contractor.
- ▼ Use “shall” when describing a provision binding on the contractor. Use “will” to indicate actions by the Government.
- ▼ Be consistent when using terminology.
- ▼ Avoid redundancy.
- ▼ Avoid vague or inexact words and generalizations.
- ▼ Avoid catch-all and open-ended phrases, such as, “is common practice in the industry,” “as directed,” or “subject to approval.”
- ▼ Define technical terms.
- ▼ Avoid using “any,” “either,” “and/or,” “etc.”
- ▼ Use abbreviations or acronyms only after spelling them out the first time they are referenced.
- ▼ Make available any document referenced, including the date or version.
- ▼ Indicate, if appropriate, desired design output, verification, and how design changes will be managed.

For additional information, refer to *U-MAS (U–Multiple Award Schedules) Virtual Campus* at [fss.gsa.gov/schedules/UMAS](https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules/UMAS).



### ***Nuts and Bolts Tip***

The following forms of communications may be used:

- ▼ electronic communications
- ▼ oral discussions
- ▼ written communications.

Note: A Request for Proposal, as defined by FAR 15, may not be used.

