



GSA Federal Acquisition Service

Dear Industry Supplier:

Thank you for your participation in our November 1, 2018 Industry Day Event where we spoke to our supplier communities for each Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) program area (i.e., Multiple Award Schedule (MAS), non-MAS, Assisted Acquisition Services, Global Supply/Stock/Supply Chain Management, and Technology Transformation Services) about their interactions with our FAS Contract Writing Systems (CWS). This included solicitation and contract management system interactions with suppliers such as for proposal/response submission, contract modification processing, contract related communications, deliverable submissions, reporting, among others. (If you missed the original meetings and would like to hear a recording, please identify which program and request a copy of the recording at FASCWS@gsa.gov.)

As someone that uses our acquisition systems to do business with us, your feedback was instrumental in helping us understand what we need in our future contract writing system. Our journey brings us to this point where we are sharing the feedback that we've received from our supplier communities and are asking you to verify that 1) we've accurately captured your pain points; and 2) ask that you make any recommended additions/clarifications to the feedback we received as we continued to explore what FAS needs in its future CWS. We enjoyed hearing about your experiences and look forward to doing what we can to make doing business with GSA more efficient and meaningful!

Please review the feedback and send any comments to FASCWS@gsa.gov with your name and contact information by January 8, 2018. Your feedback will help us define the scope of our future enterprise contract writing system, identify functionality and efficiencies that will help us to be better business partners with you, with a goal to improve the quality of your interactions with our systems for future acquisitions! Thank you for participating!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Koses", with a colorful flourish in orange and yellow at the end.

Rebecca Koses
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November 1, 2018 Industry Day Feedback Results on FAS Contract Writing Systems

GENERAL

- *What suppliers don't like about our current systems:*
 - Currently the same data must be re-entered into multiple systems. It would be helpful for the vendors to know which system data is coming from. For instance, if there's an incorrect email displayed in the Schedules eLibrary, it would help if the vendor knows where the wrong data is pulling from, so it can be corrected there
 - Allow for user ids to be assigned on an individual user basis (instead of one user id for a specific company account) and have the individual user ids associated with their corresponding company account so users assigned to a particular company account can access all data associated with that account based on their security permissions. This would minimize the need for vendors to contact GSA to transfer work from one user to another in GSA's systems if needed. Additionally, allow for the user to have single sign on to use one id for the entire process instead of having separate user ids and passwords/logins for multiple systems.
 - There should be fewer systems that should be able to share data.
 - Make usability a top priority as it is key to the important goal of government-wide usage.
 - Avoid using multiple names and/or labels for the same systems.
 - Have one system for all MACs and Schedules.
 - Provide automated alerts to prime contract holders with links into the appropriate system record.
 - Allow for traceability of solicitation number into the order number.
 - Have one record and record number for one requirement. (We've seen as many as four RFIs plus and RFP for the same requirement—each one with a new number.)
- *What suppliers want to have in a future contract writing system:*
 - An ability for the contract writing system to be a consolidated and integrated end-to-end solution (proposal to award), capturing and sharing data within the solution to minimize the need for duplicative data entry and multiple logins.
 - The data accessed, posted, and created by GSA should be aligned with the data accessed or submitted by contractors
 - An ability to view historical contract actions in one place
 - Have a consolidated access point - (single sign on with the ability to have various "modules" if needed). For example, once awarded a schedule, the system should have the ability to enter IFF sales reporting into the same system/sign-on
 - Cover multiple purposes/modules by function in the solution (e.g., new offers, modifications, 72a reporting).
 - Allow for a method to submit and track electronic communication between GSA and its contractors (and vice versa) to handle questions and concerns. This could be similar to email, but have the communication tracked in the system and accessible by other users who have access to the vendor account so information is not lost in emails.

MAS

- *What suppliers don't like about our current systems:*
 - Lots of duplication
 - Heavy reliance on email within VA
 - Two different schedules and have to sign into two different PO Portals to get your purchase, multiple systems required - portals called: poportal.gsa.gov, orders-vp.sas.gsa.gov
 - Processes are MASSIVELY labor intensive--vendors spend tons of time with SIP program
 - Vendors and COs do not see the same screens
 - It would be helpful to have a centralized location that identified awarded SINS by contract for IFF reporting purposes
 - SIP:
 - Cumbersome
 - A separate system to learn and operate
 - Uploading pictures is a problem and slow - it could take 1-½ hours to upload a replacement catalog!
 - Duplicate work (Once you have gone through eOffer/eMod then you have to go to another system SIP and its approval)
 - Difficult to use
 - No relationship between standardized spreadsheet and SIP
 - Restricted to one person/contract
 - SIP, which is used for uploading GSA Schedule contractors GSA Authorized Price lists, is not user friendly. The interface is far too complex and the manual is difficult to locate. Vendors often need to resort to calling the VSC which is time consuming and costly for GSA. This occurs even for frequent users of the system. It would be helpful if the new solution had the ability to manipulate the data in a logical way facilitating data entry for GSA's Schedule program.
 - eOffer/eMod:
 - Too much paperwork
 - No visibility on the status of modifications
 - Lack of notifications
 - Requires input of redundant information
 - Not user friendly
 - Difficult uploading process
 - Slow speed
 - Processes are different every time we do a mod and inconsistent. Inputting mods could often take 2-3 weeks
 - Redundancy within eMod for Commercial price list request
 - It could takes weeks to get a fully executed copy of a MASS mod
 - The system oscillates between entering data into a field, picking from a drop down to uploading an attachment. This becomes cumbersome and clunky. Additionally, the system mandates that all required data elements on a screen be entered before allowing the user to progress to the next screen and does not allow the user to move from one screen to others as desired throughout the data entry process. Once the proposal is submitted, the submitter cannot review what was entered for either review or for historical purposes. For both eOffer and eMod, the Schedule solicitations do not align with the requirements/screen entries
 - The solicitation does not include instructions on what is required to be entered related to the contract action. While some centers have drafted a modification instructions document, these too do not necessarily align with the eMod system requirements. For example, the Commercial Sales

Practice (CSP) form contained in the solicitations does not match what has to be entered into the eOffer/eMod.

- Modifying a schedule is cumbersome in that the information/status from the current state (last mod) to the next does not pull information forward. There is no central repository of the 5 awarded items to easily modify in the system. All of the current negotiated items for a schedule holder are not contained within the system. They are separate excel, word, pdf, etc. attachments which tend to sometimes get lost or overlooked in finalizing a future mod's documentation. It varies from center to center and CO to CO.
- There is no ability to see the historical record of submissions, nor the full contract information, including the original award and all modifications
- The system allows certain documents and information to be attached to the eMod submission, however, occasionally the contractor's documents appear to be attached but then are missing for the CO's review.
- Inconsistency:
 - Inconsistent requirement of data between different regions
 - VA are not included in our systems, thus leading to inconsistency between GSA and VA
- Small business subcontracting plan and creating reports in ESRS is difficult and there is no help - no one with subject matter expertise that can help
- Administration of contracts is different across schedules to include VA schedules
- Include the ability to retain/store the base award and all executed modifications for historical purposes. This would be helpful to both GSA and Industry. Currently, after the award or modification is executed, it's no longer available for the vendors to see after certain time period.
- Include a "Status" of the submission with more than just "pending" as exists today. It would be helpful if there was a status provided to the offeror/schedule holder that denotes where the submission is in GSA's queue and/or where it is in the process (e.g., in review, under 2nd level review, etc.).

• *What suppliers want to have in a future contract writing system:*

- Standardized modification spreadsheet for offer/mod and SIP templates should be reusable between systems
- Suppliers like the longevity of the contracts
- Good security system - it is very secure that uses a one-time token, although it can be frustrating
- Have a centralized location that identified awarded SINs by Contract for IFF reporting purposes
- Suppliers like the Corporate Commercial Plan
- Need photos for the deleted SIN in SIP
- One size fits all
- Consistency across FAS and VA
- Less redundancy and ensure data is carried through
- List of individual companies that are allow to buy off GSA unless they have a letter directing them that they can be off GSA. (4800.21 is the ground rules on sources eligible to use Schedules)
- One Subcontract plan for government wide annually instead of individually
- Like the safety nets/error checks in SIP
- More robust help documentation
- Permit TDR sales to be uploaded in excel rather than csv
- Allow suppliers to delete mods independently
- EBUY works well! eBuy is one example of a system that works well for the following reasons:
 - Simplicity and usability in design

- o Government wide usage (which may be due to its simplicity and usability)
- o Applicability to multiple contracts
- o Automated alerts to specific contract holders

ASSIST

- *What suppliers don't like about our current systems:*
 - o Inability to select more than 3 contractor peers or 3 contractor alternates as contacts on specific task orders
 - o As a large company, with several company names and contracts, we have dealt with the issue of the customer choosing the incorrect company when posting an RFP this is in ASSIST
 - o It can be challenging to find the right vendors
 - o The same POC is being used for multiple contracts and the COs don't know which one to use.
 - o The system has two levels of access - one to bind the company, and one to handle contract admin matters. There have been issues associated with a pick list - if an account isn't active, their name won't appear on the pick list
 - o There could be the same point of contact for multiple companies so it's hard to know which one is the right one - is it possible for companies to scrub the list?
 - o We have been told GSA has to choose all instances of the company in order to ensure the correct one gets seen on our side
 - o Clear vendor data that is not being used
 - o Submitting a proposal is a problem, choose from a drop down which contract it is going under
 - o Hard to see changed documents in ITSS
 - o Must enter all pricing for each CLIN - can we upload an excel file instead of a line by line input?
 - o We presume the help desk somehow categorizes calls and issues. We recommend looking into that data to identify common topics / challenges faced by industry (which may be even more effective in identifying common widespread areas of concern than thru vendor feedback alone).
 - o There should be just one name to refer to this system. The use of multiple names causes contractors some confusion (e.g., ASSIST, ITSS, RBA). Also, there is a great deal of manual entry of data that the government already has via other contract systems (e.g., FPDS). We recommend that GSA seek to utilize the data that already exists to the maximum extent practicable rather than having contractors re-entering the data on a regular basis.
 - o GSA has been rolling out incremental enhancements to the system with regular frequency. The number and degree of frequency has made it challenging to keep abreast of what is necessary to know. Consolidating upgrades to reduce frequency will help users remain current. Perhaps target accounts that are utilizing impacted capabilities with enhancement notifications to reduce update fatigue.
 - o "Post Award Collaboration" has made the system more cumbersome. Past iterations were less cumbersome as users could upload whatever documentation was necessary. The system now requires vendors to answer ~5 mandatory questions. Those questions are not always relevant to what is being addressed. Some actions also require comments to be added to support the action. Comments are frequently required in support of obvious actions. Removing these additional steps or enhancing the triggers to make these requirements applicable when relevant will help system user friendliness
 - o The screens available to contractor and government users are significantly different. These differences contribute to challenges when trying to resolve issues with clients. Modifications de-obligating funding are a good example – the government interface provides color of money data which is not available on the

contractor side. There is no reason for this information to be withheld from industry and insight would also facilitate de-obligation actions because contractors would not have to research the topic first.

- Please increase the number of login errors before the system locks out contractors.
- The system time out clock is short. Extending the amount of time before timeout will help reduce the amount of time spent repeating steps due to regular workplace interruptions
- Please have the system generate password update notifications as 90-day password expiration date approaches.
- ITSS limits contractors to 6 attachments when uploading proposals. It appears to be an arbitrary number that can be an issue given some agency proposal volume requirements. Since file size seems not to be an issue, why limit the number of attachments?
- System generated notifications provide little detail. A notification received because of a POC change doesn't look a lot different from an award, mod, RFP. You frequently need to go into the system to determine exactly what has happened. This can be particularly challenging when many people are using or have access to the system. a. Identify what IDIQ or stand-alone contract notification is tied to will be us
- The system is difficult to access because of the notification email containing new orders. The email does not note which contract is being solicited, so its difficult for industry to log in with the correct contract password.
- Improve the ability to identify and segregate RFP's from award documentation a. RFP and contract award files look the same – numbering and title conventions are the primary segregator. Would nice if there was an obvious visual differentiator or segregated into different sections within the system
- SBSA RFPs – would be useful if large businesses could have read only access to SBSA RFP's. Will improve teaming efforts.
- Obtaining contract modification documents requires excessive navigation. Executed modification documents and supporting files submitted by the contractor are located at different levels. Would be best if they were all at the same level so it's easier to keep track of everything.
- The overly burdensome CLIN response requirements can cause contractors to move their whole pricing file into the system.
- Account registrations require too many steps – All new accounts are be approved at the company level. And then you need to move a level down to associate the account request with a specific IDIQ, order, etc. Requesting accounts and tying them to specific vehicles, orders, etc. should be accomplished in one step.
- Why is there no master admin account? The main account gives a contractor the ability to add new contracts, approve new user account requests accounts, etc. But it cannot see all things that are approved under it. Where it has been associated with any IDIQ, order, etc. it can be removed by any user that also has access to that level. A contractors primary account should have access to everything by default and should not be allowed to be removed at any level.

- *What suppliers want to have in a future contract writing system:*

- I would like to see more users accounts for a Company have access. It was recently changed to only 3. It is on specific Task Orders. We can only list 3 for Peer Review and we usually have different users entering invoices
- More robust help documentation
- The ITSS help desk is extremely helpful and far more successful at resolving issues that one typically experiences when working thru a help desk.

Non MAS

- *What suppliers don't like about our current systems:*
 - Email notifications take 45 mins at times for EBUY access
 - Vendors preference is EBUY rather than other avenues
 - Vendors do not like email notifications, but double amount of notifications ensure they know when mods/amendments occur
 - System can make proposal submission difficult due to naming conventions
 - Web browser compatibility is an issue, not agnostic and not consistent
 - Invoicing systems do not have standard submission formats, vendors each use their own and could be made simpler
 - ASSIST makes pricing at the CLIN level difficult, cumbersome, does not allow use of external vendor format/template
 - ASSIST award notifications are non-FAR compliant, not terribly informative
 - Lots of mentions of "that system"---vendors are forced to use multiple systems depending on which program they are supporting
 - Don't like the two factor system
 - EBUY is easier than ASSIST when trying to find the documents because it is tied to the contract
 - When there are changes to documents on EBUY, sometimes it takes 45 minutes to an hour for the email notice of the changes
 - Opportunities are not available in a prompt manner
 - It is more effort to use FBO--suppliers prefer EBUY or ASSIST instead of directed email. FBO is more difficult to use from a searchability and user interface standpoint.
 - EBUY is much easier, but the new PIN verification is not easy to use
 - Submission of quotes is a challenge with the file names in ITSS and if the file names are too similar, suppliers often need to back them out and put them back in.
 - Logging into ITSS can be a fickle process--it's the Internet Explorer vs Chrome and vice versa issue
 - OASIS data in CPRM is not that difficult, but a standard template would be nice.
 - Manual is when a bid is due in ASSIST and we have to do CLIN work.
 - There was a question whether mods in FPDS get automatically entered in CPRM - the response was that there is a linkage now, but industry doesn't get notified
 - Suppliers do get award generic notifications from ASSIST, to include notices they didn't bid on. More specific notifications would be nice.
 - ITSS sometimes will go to create a mod and there is this thing called a version, but the trigger of the mod was not actually created. Suppliers don't get the notification. Not doing an amendment, but did and edit.
 - Also has false report on EBUY as well.
 - Reporting mods in CPRM for validated expired orders is not easy. Involves the GWAC PMO rejecting the validation before mod can be reported.
 - Uploading the documents is cumbersome, file name has issues, EBUY gives a lot of problems
 - Industry is not notified when mods in FPDS are automatically getting into CPRM
 - CO/CS will create a mod, and then do version on it, where it will not trigger it as a mod thus industry does not get any notification when those are updated
 - Issues with IE vs Chrome and vice versa
 - On EBUY, sometimes suppliers get notification that something is changed but in actuality nothing was changed. (Potential explanation is a customer-initiated change that was then reversed subsequent to email notification prior to the supplier viewing documents.)
 - Notifications in ASSIST are not FAR Compliant
 - HCAT uses discs to upload files/docs to D2
 - Workflow and compliance – notifications are not compliant

- EBUY does not update award info once item is closed
 - In July, CPRM requested validation of expired orders. Since then the reporting of deob mods for those orders has been slightly cumbersome and involves the GWAC PMO rejecting the previous validation. Is there a way to make this easier for everyone?
 - Schedules eLibrary includes pertinent and relevant information related to GSA Schedules. It has some challenges with the GWACS and OASIS information especially around being able to maintain vendor email addresses which get overwritten by their other company GSA schedules related email addresses
 - Systems do not share data. Compared to other GWAC tools, GSA systems are down more often for maintenance during the evening and weekends.
- *What suppliers want to have in a future contract writing system:*
 - Interest in document file retention, eliminates/reduces needs for FOIA requests for publicly available information (believe this was mentioned as a desirable feature similar to NIH's eGOS)
 - Add the mod number so documents are associated with the mods.
 - Notification of receipt
 - AMRDEC Safe –file share program from Army
 - One system that does a lot is better than many that do a little
 - Being about to follow it through the process with the same number
 - eGOS
 - GECA??? –GSA file sharing system
 - PCF – Army's paperless contract system
 - Pulling data from list and putting it into pricing sheet
 - More robust help documentation
 - Notification that supplier proposals were received
 - Provide a robust document repository so FOIAs can be eliminated
 - Wants one place to go--one system, rather than having different systems for different needs - wants a system that can be used across different contracts
 - System alerts of opportunities and changes to opportunities
 - Mod summary logs so that one can easily discern mod contents without having to open up each mod

Stock SOP

- *What suppliers don't like about our current systems:*
- Relative to SIP, at one point it was envisioned that the TDR website will enable the Contracting Officer to do the SIP upload. Is that still planned?
 - Looking for something like FPT to help push data to other tools
 - On eMod / eOffer the system is slow, it takes a lot of time to upload the attachments, it would be good if that can be improved.
 - If the Contracting Officer could see the same screen as the vendor that would be helpful.
 - TDR notification not accurate. Being notified that they are delinquent when they have a confirmation.
 - Requisition in OMS and EDI and saying we didn't get ship notices
 - Regardless of whether you are using a current or new system, it would be good to include more comprehensive help documentation to assist users in navigating common issues. The Help menu in the SIP software has NOTHING.
 - If the TDR sales report could be uploaded in Excel .xls format it would be helpful. Currently we are required to upload .csv format and we often get errors that must be corrected and resubmitted
 - Create mod process is cumbersome
 - Allow delete mods without oversight. Even Economic price adjustment

- SIP needs overhauled
- SIP is cumbersome
- Tracking of payments - suppliers spend a lot of time figuring out where the payment went

- *What suppliers want to have in a future contract writing system:*

- GSA's vendor portal is good
- Streamlined SIP
- Managing single contract instead of one
- Reduce the time it takes to change pricing and perform modifications
- We utilize GSA's vendor portal - it is working well for us right now
- More robust help documentation
- Allow suppliers to delete mods independently
- Streamlined process to make pricing changes

TTS

- *What suppliers don't like about our current systems:*

- No Comments

- *What suppliers want to have in a future contract writing system:*

- No Comments