Lessons Learned –July-September 2002

Independent Review Lessons Learned:

OSD has asked that the services collect Lessons Learned in five categories:

- Functionality Assessment
- Performance Work Statement (PWS) Development Phase
- Management Plan Development Phase
- Solicitation and Source Selection Phase
- Cost Comparison and Administrative Appeal Phase
- Implementation and Transition Phase
- Other

Performance Work Statement (PWS) Development Phase

Releasing solicitation prior to forming the MEO

Studies that release their solicitations at the same time as the MEO team begins the Management Plan work seem to gain the following benefits:

1. Questions asked by bidders help clarify areas of the PWS that the MEO team might have trouble meeting.
2. Amendments to the solicitation that cause the Management Plan to change can be managed more carefully.
3. Protests from bidders that it is unfair to give the Government bidder more time than the commercial bidder are eliminated.

Management Plan Development Phase

Estimating workload for the MEO

Many MEO teams estimate FTE to accomplish workload by multiplying each item in the workload by the length of time it takes to complete that item of work. This time is often called "process time", "unit time", "engineered standard time", "cycle time" or "task time". When data is collected to determine the average time that the current organization takes to complete an item of work, errors are often made.

To measure workload for typing reports, for example, the MEO team collects data by asking workers to complete a daily time record while performing that task for a period of several weeks. The time spent on doing reports is multiplied to convert to an annual total, and the total is then divided by the number of reports in the PWS to determine FTE required. The result will be invalid if during the period of data collection an average amount of workload was not accomplished.

If the data collection methods did not ensure that complete work units were measured as described in the PWS (e.g. type reports, return for comments, correct, file and distribute) the results might be inaccurate because the workers only did small parts of the task (filing or distribution) and not the entire task. For periodic tasks the sample size and the sample

time must be correct or the sample of work will not accurately reflect the entire annual workload.

Indirect Support

Many studies overlook the indirect support of the MEO that must also be considered on Line 1. The service provider is not a stand-alone activity. When the selected offeror is the MEO, certain additional recurring activities are performed by Government positions outside of the commercial activity. These activities include the counseling and appraisal of the most senior MEO positions, the approval of leave slips, and bonus determinations. This indirect support must be included on Line 1. (DoD A-76 Costing Manual, Interim Guidance, C.1.4.3)

Security Clearances

If the PWS requires the selected service provider to have access to classified information, security clearances are required as specified by the appropriate DoD or Component directives. The solicitation should clearly state the requirement for the security clearances, e.g., workload, number of positions, level of security clearance. (DoD Interim Guidance C10.4.3)

Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan

The QASP applies to the Service Provider, whether government MEO or contractor. The QAE(s) are outside the MEO and considered a wash cost for both the government and a contractor, and therefore not costed in the IHCE. The QAE may not be part of the MEO, a supervisor in the MEO or a contract administrator, as the MEO will not have a contract administrator.

Quality Control Plan

When a solicitation stipulates a Quality Control Plan, this plan is internal to the Service Provider, and performed by FTE within the MEO, should the MEO be selected. The QCP is in addition to the QASP, and must be provided for by both the MEO and any contractor bids.

Position Descriptions

Certified position descriptions are the source documents for Line 1 costs. Position descriptions have titles, series and grades. When used in the Management Plan, the titles, series and grades must be consistent. The titles and grades in the MEO and TPP must be identical to the IHCE. The win.COMPARE^2 Line 1 cannot be sorted. CA teams find it easier to check their position descriptions if they arrange them in the order that win.COMPARE^2 arranges the titles.

The IR Process

CA Teams should continue to be available to answer IRO questions after documents have been forwarded to the IRO. If the CA Teams disband, and return to concentrate "full time" on other duties when the documents are shipped to the IRO, the review timeline could be unnecessarily extended while the IRO's search for those individuals with expertise to respond to inquiries.

Implementation and Transition Phase

Post MEO Review

Many Post MEO Reviews have demonstrated that in order for the MEO to more easily track costs, a separate cost code from the Comptroller would be helpful. The MEO should carefully document the workload, quality and timeliness standards as required by the QASP.