



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ADS Chapter 300  
Agency  
Acquisition and Assistance (A&A)  
Planning

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**Functional Series 300 – Acquisition and Assistance**  
**ADS 300- Agency Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Planning**  
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## ADS 300 – Agency Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Planning

### 300.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 04/02/2013

This chapter provides the Agency's policy directives, required procedures, and internal guidance for the planning of USAID direct Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) activities. This chapter applies to all actions awarded and administered by USAID Contracting Officers (COs) and Agreement Officers (AOs) from all funding sources (program, operating expense, etc.)

Federal and Agency regulations, including the [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\) \(Part 7.102\)](#) and [ADS 201, Program Cycle Operational Policy](#), require advance planning for Agency A&A awards. In particular for acquisition, the FAR requires all U.S. government departments and agencies to perform acquisition planning and conduct market research to ensure that the government meets its needs in the most effective, economical, and timely manner possible. Similar planning for assistance is also essential. The Agency A&A Plan is USAID's business system for A&A planning.

The A&A strategy developed for the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), required by [ADS 201](#), will contribute to the A&A planning and documentation process defined in this ADS chapter. The PAD documents the project design process for Agency development programs and is completed (where applicable) before A&A planning (i.e. before the action is entered into the Agency A&A Plan or any necessary individual acquisition/assistance plan is drafted). The PAD must contain an implementation plan for the overall project that includes an A&A strategy with the mix of implementing mechanisms contemplated during the life of the project, including all actions awarded by USAID COs and AOs. When there is sufficient detail available for the CO or AO to make a determination on the choice of instrument (acquisition or assistance), the PAD must include a description and justification for the determination.

### 300.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

- a. The **Administrator** will provide approval to issue new solicitations at or above \$40 million in total estimated cost/total estimated amount and proposed cost-type agreements and program contributions with public international organizations (PIOs) at or above \$5 million, whether non-competitive awards or the result of solicitations.
- b. The cognizant **Assistant Administrators** or **Independent Office Directors** will (1) approve new planned solicitations with a total estimated cost/total estimated amount at or above \$20 million and less than \$40 million and proposed cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs below

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\$5 million, whether via a competitive process or otherwise; and (2) provide clearance for all A&A solicitations at or above \$40 million and cost-type agreements and program contributions to PIOs at or above \$5 million (whether via a competitive process otherwise) prior to the Administrator's review.

c. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA)** administers the Agency Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Plan. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance, Policy Division (M/MPBP/POL)** serves as the Secretariat for the **Senior Obligation Alignment Review (SOAR)** for solicitations, and proposed cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs that meet the criteria for the SOAR process, to provide quality-control and the tracking of timelines.

d. The **SOAR Liaisons** for the **Bureau/Independent Offices (B/IOs)** serve as the primary points of contact in USAID/Washington regarding SOAR documents.

A **Responsible SOAR Liaison** is the individual in USAID/Washington who collects feedback and comments from his/her Operating Unit (OU) and other stakeholder OUs, and coordinates with the designated Planner regarding SOAR proposals initiated by the OU.

e. The **SOAR Advisors** provide substantive input and advice on SOAR Documents, and ensure that they meet the Agency's priorities. SOAR Advisors complete the [SOAR Review Form](#).

f. **Operating Units (OUs), Missions, and B/IOs** in consultations with the Contracting/Agreement Officers (where appropriate) are responsible for:

- Acquisition and Assistance planning, including conducting market research;
- Identifying Planners for particular procurement (see section **300.2.e**);
- Preparing, submitting, and updating their A&A Plan via the Agency A&A Plan system;
- Completing pre-award requirements (e.g., preparing a written individual acquisition and/or assistance plan, if necessary); and
- Identifying a Planner to receive and facilitate the review and approval of SOAR documents.

g. Where required, the **Planner** is the designated person responsible for developing and maintaining any necessary, written Individual Acquisition Plan (IAP), or for the planning function in those acquisitions ([FAR 7.101](#)) or

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assistance actions that do not require a written individual assistance plan. The Planner will also develop the SOAR documents, where applicable. This individual may be, at the discretion of Operating Units, the same person who enters operating unit data into the Agency A&A Plan system and/or who is responsible for A&A planning for the overall operating unit. The Planner may be the Project Design Team Leader or Project Manager, or his or her designee ([ADS 201](#)), such as the intended Contracting Officer/Agreement Officer Representative (COR/AOR), who will work with the CO/AO in carrying out the planning function. OUs must ensure that a Planner is identified for a particular procurement. Though OUs have the discretion to determine the appropriate individual based on the organizational structure and functions of the unit, the Planner must be an individual with sufficient authority in the OU to ensure that planning complies with this chapter, the planning requirements of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), and Policy Letter 11-01 Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions issued by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

**h. Contracting Officers (COs) and Agreement Officers (AOs):**

- Review the data in the Agency A&A Plan, consult with their respective technical offices and program offices, as necessary, and concur with the plan;
- Work with Planners to ensure that Individual Acquisition Plans comply with statutory and regulatory requirements and demonstrate sound business judgment and sign the IAPs;
- Obtain the concurrence of the USAID Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) on the acquisition strategy for contracts awarded in USAID/Washington at or above \$25,000; and
- Work with respective technical offices to establish milestone schedules for actions in the A&A Plan and ensure that the milestone schedules/plans are entered into the Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS).

**i.** The **Contract Review Board (CRB)** reviews solicitation and award documents for proposed contracts at or above \$25 million as outlined in [ADS 302, USAID Direct Contracting](#).

**j.** The **Office of the Executive Secretary** will facilitate the Administrator's review of the SOAR documents and pre-award certification memoranda; schedule review meetings with the Administrator; and issue follow-up actions, as appropriate.

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k. The **Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)** monitors the Agency A&A Plan for small business involvement, reviews requirements for potential small business opportunities, and provides concurrence for all contracts awarded in Washington at or above \$25,000.

### 300.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

#### 300.3.1 Agency Acquisition and Assistance Plan and Review System Effective Date: 06/27/2018

USAID has developed a system for advanced Acquisition and Assistance planning, the Agency A&A Plan, which can be accessed via the Agency Intranet Web site at: <http://aaplan.usaid.gov/>. Please note: Users must register in order to gain access to the system. Information regarding the A&A Plan and the user access instructions can be found at: <https://pages.usaid.gov/M/aa-plan>. Once registered, users may access the A&A Plan system in one of three ways: 1) Click the A&A Plan icon in the Corporate Applications Folder on your desktop; 2) Click on the A&A Plan icon in your My.USAID.Gov Apps Folder; or 3) Access the direct URL at: <http://aaplan.usaid.gov>.

**A&A PLAN**  
VERSION 1.0

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**Welcome to the Acquisition and Assistance Plan System**

Plan Dashboard Reports Help

**System and Policy Announcements**

Administer Announcements

**Update Data for Q3**

**Update Planning Data for Q3 and Update Complex Awards (\$25M or Greater Info).** FY2015 Q3 A&A Plan snapshot is due on April 15, 2015. Ensure your OU's data is updated and the following fields for your new complex award actions (with an estimated TEC range value of \$25M or greater) are current: "Anticipated Solicitation Release Date," "Anticipated Award Date", "Award Description", and all of the fields on the "AARAD Info" tab. This will be the central focus of the Q3 AA level meetings so your attention to the fields mentioned is critical.

**Expiring Funds**

Operating Units are encouraged to ensure **expiring funds are committed by March 29, 2015.**

**Update Planning Data for Q2**

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**Purpose:**

This system captures planned A&A actions from all Operating Units (Bureaus, Independent Offices, and Missions). The Agency A&A Plan:

- Functions as a management tool for operating units,
- Helps to ensure USAID obligates its funds in a timely manner,
- Provides an overview of planned A&A activities for senior managers,
- Supports the achievement of the USAID Transformation, and
- Enables technical offices, in coordination with program offices, and Contracting/Agreement Officers/A&A Specialists (hereafter referred to as CO/AOs) to gain a better understanding of their portfolios and to plan their workloads more efficiently throughout the fiscal year.

**Required:**

The Requesting Operating Unit - including Bureaus, Independent Offices, and Missions - is required to do the following:

- Develop an A&A Plan in the Agency system in consultation with their cognizant CO/AO.
- Enter, into the Agency system, all planned actions at or above the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in FAR 2.101, from all funding sources (operating expense program funds, etc.) that a CO/AO must execute during a fiscal year and beyond, including:
  - Contracts;
  - Grants;
  - Cooperative Agreements;
  - Task Orders (including orders against General Services Administration Federal Supply Schedules, U.S. government-wide acquisition contracts, and multi-agency contracts);
  - U.S. Personal Services Contracts;
  - Incremental Funding;
  - Award Extensions;
  - Increases in award Total Estimated Cost/Total Estimated Amount;
  - Interagency Agreements; and
  - All other implementing *mechanisms or modifications* awarded by a CO/AO that obligate USAID funds for the procurement of goods and services.

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- Enter all cost-type agreements and program contributions with Public International Organizations executed by an AO, AA, or Mission Director into the system.
- Update the plan on a continual basis throughout the fiscal year. The Agency A&A Plan provides a snapshot of each OU's – and the overall Agency's – A&A activities at any given time.

If an action meets the elements above, the OU must enter the action in the Agency A&A Plan and Business Forecast (as applicable, see **300.3.7**) prior to award, except as otherwise indicated in this ADS chapter. COs/AOs must confirm that an action is in the A&A Plan before signing the award. The CO/AO must notify the requesting office of this requirement if a pending award is not in the plan. The CO/AO may decline to execute the action until the requesting office adds it to their A&A Plan.

Actions in the A&A Plan that have not been marked as “awarded” in the Action Status field at the end of the fiscal year will automatically carry forward to the next fiscal year A&A Plan. Users can modify these actions in the next fiscal year's A&A Plan to update the status and other relevant data fields.

**Optional:**

Operating Units may, at their discretion, also include the following types of planned actions in their A&A Plan each fiscal year:

- Awards between \$25,000 and at or above the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in FAR 2.101,
- Administrative actions signed by a CO/AO, and
- Actions not executed by a CO/AO, with the exception of agreements with PIOs.

**Field Support:**

Missions and Operating Units (OUs) that elect to use contracts, agreements, and grants managed in Washington by Regional and Pillar Bureaus with field support funding or sub-obligation funding are not required to include these actions in their A&A Plans. Plan entries for these instruments, including field support and sub-obligations planned by other OUs, are prepared and maintained by the Washington offices that manage these awards.

Access instruments managed by Regional Bureaus must be coordinated directly with the respective Regional Bureau Agreement Officer/Contracting Officer Representatives for the instruments. Access to A&A instruments managed by Regional Bureaus must be coordinated through the Agency Field Support System. Planning with the Washington OUs should be done as soon as

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Operational Year Budgets (OYB) are set and Operational Plans (OPs) are submitted.

**CO/AO Role for Maintaining and Overseeing the A&A Plan:**

The CO/AO, in coordination with M/OAA colleagues, is required to do the following:

- Review data entered into the A&A Plan system on an ongoing basis to ensure that the information and planned dates are accurate;
- Consult with their respective technical offices and program offices;
- Confirm that actions listed can be awarded by the dates indicated;
- Make any needed changes directly in the Agency A&A Plan;
- Communicate with technical office and program office colleagues regarding any changes made within the Agency A&A Plan;
- Provide concurrence with the A&A Plan on an ongoing basis, and before all deadlines referenced in **300.3.2**; and
- Confirm required actions are in the A&A Plan before signature.

**Requesting Office Role for Maintaining and Overseeing the A&A Plan:**

The requesting technical office, in coordination with the program office and the CO/AO, is required to do the following:

- Plan actions in a timely manner and ensure the entry of accurate and complete data into the Agency A&A Plan as indicated in **300.3.2**, and
- Ensure the inclusion of all required actions in the OU's A&A Plan.

**300.3.2 Agency A&A Yearly Planning Schedule**

Effective Date: 03/14/2016

M/MPBP will take a snapshot of the data in accordance with the planning schedule below and share them with Agency senior management for analytical, planning, and management purposes. The data will also inform the Agency's quarterly Business Forecast.

Action	Bureau/Office	Due Date
Snapshot of A&A Plan – Initial	M/MPBP	October 31
Snapshot of A&A Plan – Quarter 1	M/MPBP	January 1
Snapshot of A&A Plan – Quarter 2	M/MPBP	April 1

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Action	Bureau/Office	Due Date
Commitment of Expiring Funds Completed	Operating Units	NLT March 29
Snapshot of A&A Plan – Quarter 3	M/MPBP	July 1
Expiring funds designated for field support planned and authorized in the Field Support Database	Mission Operating Units and Regional Bureau Program Offices	NLT May 30
Field support sub-obligations authorized in the Field Support Database	Mission Operating Units	NLT June 30
A&A Plan FY closing date	All Operating Units	Third Monday in July
Obligation of expiring funds	COs/AOs	NLT July 15
Field support New Obligation Authority (NOA) funds authorized in the Field Support Database	Regional Bureau Program Offices (based on input from Mission Operating Units)	NLT July 31
End of fiscal year		September 30
Snapshot of A&A Plan – Quarter 4	M/MPBP	October 5

*\*The above dates are for each fiscal year.*

### **300.3.3 Agency A&A Plan Annual Fiscal Year Closing Date**

Effective Date: 03/14/2016

The Agency Acquisition and Assistance Plan closes on the third Monday in July of each fiscal year. Actions added to the Agency A&A Plan after the closing date will be treated with a lower priority than any actions already included in the Plan or could lead to adjustments in the Plan to accommodate them.

The closing date helps ensure the CO/AO concurs that actions listed in the Plan meet the appropriate procurement action lead time (PALT) for the particular type of action will be awarded by the date included in the milestone schedule (see **300.3.5**) and will be entered in the Agency A&A Plan.

In addition, any expiring funds associated with actions submitted after the closing date will be subject to reallocation to other funding requirements. The closing date does not apply to increases in funding amounts for those awards already listed in the Plan but not yet awarded.

Expiring funds designated for field support to Pillar Bureau awards must be planned and authorized in the Field Support system no later than May 30 of each year. The field support database will not accept funds after this date.

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**300.3.4 Senior Obligation Alignment Review (SOAR) of Planned A&A Solicitations and Proposed Cost-Type Agreements and Program Contributions with Public International Organizations**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

The Agency revised its process for engaging senior leadership in the review of proposed high-dollar-value A&A awards with a total estimated cost/total estimated amount of \$20 million or more (based upon the independent Government cost estimate) prior to the issuance of the solicitation, and proposed cost-type agreements and program contributions with Public International Organizations (PIOs), whether non-competitive awards or those that result from solicitations. The new policy provides oversight on the use of mechanisms and proposed results, and helps to ensure the Agency is using innovative approaches to provide long-term sustainable outcomes. The review also contributes to more rigorous project design and establishes greater linkages between Washington and field activities.

The SOAR process applies to the following:

- 1) New A&A solicitations issued by an M/OAA backstop CO/AO, including contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, Leader with Associate Awards, associate awards, indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts and Task Orders issued under IDIQs, whether via a competitive process or otherwise;
- 2) Interagency agreements; and
- 3) Proposed new cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs executed by a CO/AO, an AA, or a Mission Director, whether via a competitive process or otherwise.

The review process does not apply to the following:

- 1) Other solicitations and agreements (e.g., Government-to-Government, bilateral development partner agreements, and host-country contracts) issued by officials outside of the M/OAA backstop in Washington, or in Missions;
- 2) Instances in which an exception to competition signed by the Assistant Administrator or Administrator documents how the proposed award addresses the areas covered by the SOAR review; or
- 3) Proposed awards and PIO agreements for Food for Peace emergency food aid, urgently needed humanitarian assistance, or urgent activities of

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the Office of Transition Initiatives. In such instances, the OU must enter the awards in the A&A Plan and provide pertinent details of the awards to the Administrator in leadership briefings, or through informational memoranda.

### **300.3.4.1 SOAR Review and Approval**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

At the pre-solicitation stage, the responsible Assistant Administrator (AA) or Independent Office (IO) Director must approve the issuance of new planned solicitations with a total estimated cost/total estimated amount of \$20 million, but less than \$40 million. The AA or IO Director may also require approval for solicitations for select awards below \$20 million on a case-by-case basis, but a SOAR document is not required below \$20 million threshold. The responsible AA or IO Director must also approve new cost-type agreements and program contributions to PIOs with a total estimated cost below \$5 million, whether via competitive process or otherwise.

Individuals who are serving in an acting capacity for the regional and pillar bureau AA or IO Director may sign SOAR documents consistent with authorities outlined in [ADS 103, Delegations of Authority](#). The approval of SOAR documents may not be otherwise delegated.

The Administrator must approve the issuance of new planned A&A solicitations estimated at or above \$40 million, and new competitive or non-competitive cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs at or above \$5 million.

The review process is at the pre-solicitation phase except in the case of agreements with PIOs. Reviews are required whether a proposed PIO award results from a competitive solicitation, sole-source, or any exception to, or limited, competition. If a solicitation results in a planned award to a PIO, the review is conducted at pre-award and the agreement must be approved by the AA (if below \$5 million) or the Administrator (\$5 million or above).

At the Administrator's discretion, certain planned solicitations with a total estimated value below \$40 million and cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs with a total estimated amount below \$5 million may be subject to his/her review. This may include solicitations, and proposed cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs related to high profile Presidential initiatives and activities of specific interest, e.g., activities in countries the Administrator is scheduled to visit. ES will notify the Planner if the Administrator selects for review a planned solicitation under \$40 million or a proposed cost-type agreement or program contribution with a PIO under \$5 million.

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OUs must use the [SOAR Document Template](#) accompanied by an Action Memo to provide standard descriptive data (Part 1); the justification for the award (Part 2); and the approval to proceed with a solicitation or a proposed cost-type agreement or program contribution with a PIO (Part 3), whether a non-competitive award or the result of a solicitation. The objectives are the following:

1. Ensure USAID senior leadership knows about the major upcoming Agency acquisition and assistance solicitations and proposed cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs;
2. Ensure leadership oversight on topics such as: a) excessive use of sole-source contracts, or over-reliance on indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contracts (IDIQs) and/or large umbrella awards; b) cost-effectiveness; c) increasing the use of local and/or small U.S. organizations; d) sustainability; and e) advancing collaborative approaches in USAID partnering, such as co-financing, co-design, and co-collaboration.
3. Ensure planners, drafters, and reviewers focus on a variety of topics that are key to state-of-the-art development programming and/or other priorities of the Administrator.

The responsible Planner must prepare the SOAR document for planned new solicitations at or above \$20 million in total estimated cost/total estimated amount or proposed cost-type agreements and program contributions with PIOs that are subject to the review process. In the SOAR document, the Planner must address the mandatory and applicable optional questions identified in the template. The descriptive data in Part 1 of the template must be no more than three lines for each field and the justification provided in Part 2 of the template must be no more than five pages. M/OAA or ES will return submissions that exceed these limitations will be returned. The Planner should not submit supporting documentation (e.g., PAD and IAP) unless specifically requested.

- a. SOAR documents approved by the AA or IO Director Regional Bureau AAs will serve as the approving officials for SOAR Documents initiated within their respective Bureaus in USAID/Washington or overseas Missions that fall within their region. Pillar Bureau AAs and IO Directors will approve SOARs initiated in their B/IO.

The Planner must first obtain clearances in the initiating office/Mission, including the Mission Director/Head of the Operating Unit, and then forward the completed SOAR document to the designated B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison, with a copy to [soar@usaid.gov](mailto:soar@usaid.gov). The Responsible SOAR Liaison will manage the USAID/Washington consultation/clearance process for SOAR Documents initiated in the B/IO. The initiating B/IO should require no more than four clearances within the Bureau or Office prior to the AA's clearance (e.g., Country Desk Officer,

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Technical Officer who participated in the design process, Program Office, and Deputy Assistant Administrator).

Simultaneous with obtaining clearances in the initiating Bureau, the Responsible SOAR Liaisons for the regional Bureaus will forward SOAR Documents to all Pillar Bureaus and the Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives (CFOI) for comment. Responsible SOAR liaisons for the Pillar Bureaus will forward SOAR documents to the other Pillar Bureaus, CFBCI, and Regional Bureaus (when the A&A activity will be implemented within one country or region). The B/IOs will have no more than five business days from the day after receipt to provide comments that must include substantive solutions, otherwise the comments will be disregarded and the document will move to the next stage. The Responsible SOAR liaison will work with the Planner to consider comments, and make any necessary revisions to the SOAR within three business days. OUs should engage with Pillar and Regional Bureau staff during the design of projects to ensure they address key issues prior to the SOAR stage. The review by the Pillar/Regional Bureau and CFBCI does not apply to SOAR documents for operational activities (e.g., information technology, management services, financial services, audit services, etc.).

After incorporating any changes, the Responsible SOAR Liaison will then forward the SOAR documents to the cognizant AA or IO Director for approval, with a copy to **soar@usaid.gov** and the Planner. The AA/IO Director will have no more than three business days from the day after receipt of the SOAR document to raise substantive issues or provide approval. If the responsible AA/IO Director or the program office does not respond within the three business days, the Planner must note on the SOAR document that the three business days have lapsed and proceed to the next stage of the SOAR document approval process.

If the AA or clearing officials raises substantive issues, the clock will stop until the issues have been resolved, but the parties should make every effort to resolve issues within three days. The SOAR Secretariat will report lengthy delays to AA/M for resolution.

The B/IO SOAR Liaison must send an email to **soar@usaid.gov** to document the stop and start dates. In addition, the Responsible SOAR Liaison must note the dates on the approval page for the AA. The Planner must maintain documentation of when he or she sent the SOAR document to the responsible AA for approval.

After the AA/IO Director has signed the SOAR document (or three business days have lapsed), the Planner will forward the approved SOAR document to the CO/AO who will proceed with the solicitation or PIO

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agreement/solicitation. The Planner must ensure that any issues raised by the AA are addressed prior to proceeding with the solicitation or PIO agreement/solicitation (see [ADS 300sad, SOAR Document Flowcharts](#)).

**b. SOAR Documents Approved by the Administrator**

If the SOAR document is for a proposed solicitation of \$40 million or above, or a proposed cost-type agreement or program contribution with a PIO of \$5 million or above (whether a non-competitive award or the result of a solicitation) the SOAR Liaison must incorporate any revisions that result from the clearance/review process in (a) above, and forward the SOAR document for the review of SOAR Advisors. The SOAR Advisors must each complete the [ADS 300mas, SOAR Review Form](#). The SOAR Advisors will have three business days from the day after receipt to complete the SOAR Review Form and raise substantive issues. The SOAR Advisors do not provide clearance. The SOAR Advisors do not review SOAR documents for operational activities (e.g., information technology, management services, financial services, audit services, etc.)

**c. The Responsible SOAR Liaison will forward the SOAR package (which includes an Action Memo, the [SOAR Template](#) and the [SOAR Advisors Review Forms](#)) to the cognizant Assistant Administrator for clearance after the consultation process with the SOAR Advisors.**

The AA will have three business days from the day after receipt to provide clearance or raise substantive issues. The Responsible SOAR Liaison will then forward the SOAR package for clearance by AA/M, the General Counsel and the Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantage Business Utilization (OSDBU) clearing officials who will also have three business days from the day after receipt to provide clearance, or offer substantive comments.

After obtaining all required clearances, the Responsible SOAR Liaison must forward the SOAR package to ES with a copy to [soar@usaid.gov](mailto:soar@usaid.gov). The Planner should submit only the Action Memorandum to the Administrator along with the SOAR Document Template and SOAR Advisors Review Forms for the Administrator's review. The Planner should not submit supporting documentation (e.g., PAD and IAP) unless specifically requested. ES will return for revision any SOAR documents without the required clearances, and any that do not meet the requirements outlined in the [SOAR Document Template](#). ES will send a tasker through the responsible AA if follow-up is needed after the Administrator's review of a SOAR document (see [ADS 300sad, SOAR Flowcharts](#)).

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The Administrator will have ten business days from the day after ES receives a completed SOAR document to raise substantive issues, or approve the SOAR document. At the Administrator's discretion, a review panel may convene during this ten-day timeframe. If the Administrator requests a review meeting, the panel may include the AA/M, the Director of M/OAA, the Director of OSDBU, the General Counsel, a representative from the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), the SOAR Advisors and ES. The responsible AA, Mission Director (if applicable), and other staff deemed appropriate by the Bureau could also receive any invitation. To expedite the process outlined above, OUs may request a preliminary meeting with the Office of the Administrator at any point before submitting SOAR documents formally to ES.

If the Administrator or clearing officials raise substantive issues, the clock will stop until the issues have been resolved, ideally within five business days. The clock will also stop if there is a scheduling conflict because of the Administrator's schedule or the schedule of the submitting OU. ES will notify the Responsible SOAR Liaison and **soar@usaid.gov** when the clock stops and starts. ES will also note the stop and start dates on the approval page.

Processing the SOAR document for pre-solicitation, or the proposed PIO agreement, does not require a full draft solicitation or proposed agreement. OUs should proceed early in the planning process once the CO/AO receives a draft concept or statement of work or program description, an evaluation or selection criteria, and Federal Government cost estimate. The CO/AO will not issue a solicitation make any final requirement documents available, or execute a PIO agreement without the approval of the responsible AA or the Administrator, or written notification from the Planner that the timeframe for approval has lapsed. The Procurement Action Lead Time does not begin until the CO/AO receives the approved SOAR document or notification from the Planner that the approval timeframe has lapsed, and also receives and accepts the other required documentation as outlined in **300.3.5**. The COR/AOR and CO/AO must retain a copy of the SOAR document in their files.

#### **300.3.4.2 Award Notice**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

Upon issuance of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements greater than or equal to \$40 million, the Contracting/Agreement Officer will ensure that the Congressional Award Notice (commonly referred to as the LEG Notice) sent to LPA also goes to the cognizant Assistant Administrator, ES, and **soar@usaid.gov**. ES will distribute the notice to the Administrator and other relevant staff in A/AID (see [ADS 302man, Congressional Award Notice Procedures](#)).

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**300.3.4.3 Secretariat Function**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

The Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance, Policy Division (M/MPBP/POL) serves as Secretariat for the SOAR process, providing quality control and the tracking of timelines. M/MPBP/POL will receive and respond to inquiries in the **soar@usaid.gov** mailbox.

**300.3.5 Procurement Action Lead Time (PALT)**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

When planning Acquisition and Assistance actions, it is important to understand the time it takes to process them. Contracting/Agreement Officers and technical offices must work together to establish realistic milestone schedules for all actions on the Agency A&A Plan and tailor them to fit the individual action. These schedules are an important accounting of the individual milestone events for actions to ensure timely awards. When developing the milestone schedule, the program/technical office and CO/AOs must consider the competitive nature of the action.

The M Bureau will project and record the timeframes related to such pre-solicitation items as activity/project approval and senior leadership SOAR reviews as part of the Global Acquisition and Assistance Milestones. The dates agreed to by the technical and program offices with their CO/AO on these items are considered pre-solicitation planning activities; also referred to as Pre-PALT dates. The M Bureau will also track and monitor these Pre-PALT dates as milestones, and they will be part of the Milestone Plan.

The program and technical offices must include their CO/AO in the design stage of their actions. The program and technical offices must also submit draft documentation with all applicable timeframes (for example, when the activity/project will be approved, when the statement of work (SOW), including evaluation criteria, instructions to offerors/applicants and an independent Federal Government cost estimate, will be provided) to the CO/AO, as early as possible in the planning process. The COs/AOs, in turn, will work with the cognizant project/technical staff on the dates that the CO/AO must enter for the solicitation through the award phase.

Milestone schedules/plans are required for new awards in the Global Acquisition and Assistance System. COs/AOs must ensure the proper entry of milestone schedules/plans into GLAAS. Negotiators must select the appropriate Milestone Plan Template for the type of award they will create. They must choose from one of the standard Milestone Plan templates in GLAAS created and approved by M/OAA and must not create a custom template. After selecting the Start Date

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of the Milestone Plan, negotiators must link the Milestone Plan to the Requisition and baseline the Milestone Plan. As each step is completed, the negotiator must enter the Actual Dates for that particular step so the PALT can be calculated accurately.

The estimated typical timeframes or PALTs for COs/AOs to award select actions are provided below. All timeframes are stated in calendar days. The PALT begins when the CO/AO has received and accepted a complete GLAAS request for an action that was entered in the Agency A&A Plan and Review tool. A complete GLAAS request for a new action must include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Approved Project Appraisal Document (PAD) where required, including required analyses and annexes([ADS 201](#)) or equivalent documents (may be provided outside the GLAAS request attachments);
- The justification memo to the CO/AO recommending the choice of instrument if the instrument was not determined in the PAD or if an amendment to the PAD is necessary (see [ADS 304.3.5](#));
- Statement of work, statement of objectives for acquisition, a program description for assistance, or performance based statement for Section C of the solicitation or Notice of Funding Opportunity;
- Solicitation language designating indicators which the implementing partner will be required to collect and report for Section F of the solicitation. These indicators should be derived from the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, an annex to the PAD;
- Independent government cost estimate;
- Proposal submission instructions to the offeror or applicant;
- Technical evaluation or selection criteria (for a competitive action) to be used by the Technical Evaluation/Selection Committee;
- For acquisitions, a branding strategy;
- Additional or deferred assessments following the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) required in the PAD, such as an Environmental Impact Assessment (per [ADS 201](#));
- For acquisitions, documentation that procurements above the simplified acquisition threshold will comply with the requirements of the Officer of Federal Procurement Policy Letter 11-01, and the Performance of

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Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions using the A&A Template on Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions;

- Written Individual Acquisition Plan, if required;
- Market research documentation;
- Documentation of the climate risk assessment per [ADS 201](#) and [ADS 201mal, Climate Risk Management for USAID Projects and Activities](#);
- Any other documents needed for special clearances, e.g., source nationality/ waivers, restricted commodities, limited competition or restricted eligibility, NSDD-38, and any others if not included in the PAD; and
- For new planned awards subject to the senior management review process, an approved SOAR document, or notification from the Planner that the timeframe for approval has lapsed.

The CO/AO will advise the project/technical staff on the specific documentation required for the type of action planned.

#### PROCUREMENT ACTION LEAD TIMES BY TYPE OF ACTION

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME (Calendar Days)</b>
Unilateral Contract Modification	15 days
Administrative Contract Modification	31 days
Bilateral Contract Modification	91 days
Cooperative Agreement (Non-Competitive)	90 days
Cooperative Agreement (Competitive)	150 days
Cooperative Agreement Modification	71 days
Cooperative Agreement (Technical Office Competition)	90 days
Definitive Contract (Competitive)	268 days
Definitive Contract (Limited Sources)	268 days
Definitive Contract (Sole Source)	151 days
Definitization of Letter Contract	151 days
Indefinite Quantity Contract	327 days
Grant (Competitive)	150 days
Grant (Non-Competitive)	90 days
Grant (Technical Office Competition)	90 days
Grant Amendment	71 days
Inter-Agency Agreement	90 days

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ACTION	TIMEFRAME (Calendar Days)
Inter-Agency Agreement (Modification)	60 days
Letter Contract	61 days
New Work - Bilateral Contract Modification	91 days
Priced Orders (task orders under BPA's or IQC's)	75 days
Priced Order Non-Competitive	48 days
Termination for Convenience (settlement)	143 days
Termination for Default (settlement)	143 days
Termination for Convenience	21 days
Termination for Default	21 days
Unpriced Bilateral Contract Modification	103 days
Unpriced Order	39 days
Personal Services Contract	145 days
Personal Services Contract Modification	45 days
Purchase Order (non-Competitive)	48 days
Purchase Order (Competitive)	75 days
Purchase Order Modification	31 days
Award Fee Modification	32 days
Basic Ordering Agreement	159 days
Option Exercise Modification	61 days

For any award that must be obligated by September 30 of the current fiscal year, the program/technical office must submit the request with the supporting documents required for the specific type of action to the cognizant CO/AO with sufficient time according to the above PALTs. The action must also be in the Agency A&A Plan (per **300.3.1**). Technical offices must consult with the CO/AO on timing and realistic completion of the action. The CO/AO will need to take into account all Agency priorities, feasibility of timeline, and planned workload considerations.

### **300.3.6 Agency A&A Templates for Technical Officers and Contracting Professionals**

Effective Date: 08/24/2016

In an effort to streamline procurement processes, a series of [Agency Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Templates](#) are provided on the Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA) Intranet for use by both technical officers and contracting professionals to assist in awarding actions on the Agency A&A Plan. These templates streamline and standardize Agency A&A-related practice, reduce Procurement Action Lead Time (PALT), and create a common reference point for Agency A&A documents.

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The mandatory templates provide a comprehensive set of standardized tools, which range from cost guidance to sample acquisition and assistance documents. The guidance and documents are designed to provide a clear sense of compulsory framework and the minimal information that must be included in each area of each template.

The documents are grouped into three sections: Acquisition and Assistance; Acquisition (only); and Assistance (only) and can be found on the M/OAA Intranet [Acquisition & Assistance Mandatory Templates Web site](#).

M/OAA may periodically revise templates or add new ones to the list and encourages Agency staff to submit suggestions for new templates and revisions to existing templates. Agency staff must continue to monitor this ADS chapter and the M/OAA Intranet [Acquisition & Assistance Mandatory Templates Web site](#) for new or revised templates.

### **300.3.7 Business Forecast and Other Ad Hoc Data Calls**

Effective Date: 03/14/2016

M/OAA uses the data from the Agency A&A Plan to publish the Business Forecast. Within the Agency A&A Plan, the CO/AO is responsible for reviewing all actions to determine the following:

- (1) If the action is/will be an open, competitive opportunity for the Business Forecast; and
- (2) Whether all fields for the Business Forecast are accurate and complete for publication.

All current or future competitive opportunities must be in the Business Forecast (see <https://pages.usaid.gov/M/OAA/agency-business-forecast-preparation-guidance>). M/OAA posts the forecast for public viewing on a quarterly basis to highlight opportunities for small and other businesses that are (or will be in the future) open for the receipt of a proposal or application. Agency officials are encouraged to utilize the data from the Agency A&A Plan in lieu of conducting any ad hoc data calls.

### **300.3.8 Selecting the Appropriate Instrument**

Effective Date: 04/02/2013

The Contracting/Agreement Officers must determine the appropriate instrument for each award in accordance with the principal purpose of the award as required by the [Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act](#) and the policies outlined in [ADS 304, Selecting Between Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Implementing Instruments](#).

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### **300.3.9 Agency Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Plan Reviews**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

The Bureau for Management will conduct quarterly reviews of each Bureau's A&A Plan. The Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Management (AA/M) and the Senior Procurement Executive will participate in annual meetings, along with the Assistant Administrator of each Bureau. Additional adhoc meetings may be scheduled, as necessary. The A&A Plan Reviews will focus on each Bureau's planned actions as listed in the Agency A&A Plan system. The Director of OSDBU will participate in the initial review of the annual A&A Plans. Additionally, the A&A Plan Review meetings will discuss how the planned award will enhance competition, expand the partner base, and utilize the appropriate size and type of award mechanism.

The status of the SOAR documents will be discussed during the A&A Plan Review meetings.

### **300.3.10 Contract Review Board (CRB)**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

The Contract Review Board must review solicitation and award documents for acquisitions at or above \$25 million. Policies, procedures and parameters for CRB reviews appear in [ADS 302](#) and the [Contract Review Board Guidelines](#).

For proposed contract awards at or above the CRB threshold of \$25 million, as part of the solicitation package, the CO must provide to the CRB the SOAR documents for new planned solicitations cleared or approved by the responsible AA or the Administrator as specified at **300.3.4.1**. In the event that the timeframes for a response from the approving official lapsed with no action, the Planner must document the notification of the lapse on the SOAR document.

### **300.3.11 Acquisition Planning**

#### **300.3.11.1 Small Business Review**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

OSDBU must concur with the acquisition strategy for all contracts awarded in Washington at or above \$25,000, except personal services contracts and those made on behalf of Missions that are solely for mission requirements.

All procurement actions above the micro-purchase threshold, but below the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in FAR 2.101, are required to be set-aside for small business in accordance with FAR19.502-2 unless the Contracting Officer determines that there is not a reasonable expectation of

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obtaining offers from two or more responsible small businesses that are competitive in terms of market prices, quality, and delivery.

The Operating Unit must conduct market research which may include a sources sought notice in Federal Business Opportunities (FBO), and consultation with OSDBU to promote the participation of small businesses. The CO considers the OU's recommendations and determines the appropriate acquisition strategy. Then the CO must use the [Small Business Review Form 1410-14](#) to obtain OSDBU's concurrence for actions at or above \$25,000, including Institutional Support Contracts and Agreements, multiple award contracts, and orders under GSA Schedule contracts. In cases where OSDBU disagrees with the CO's acquisition strategy, the procedures related to adjudicating disagreements regarding small business set-asides in [FAR Part 19](#) and small business screening in [AIDAR Part 719](#) apply.

In addition to the above small business reviews of individual procurements under the noted requirements, the Director of OSDBU will participate with the AA/M and AAs in reviews of annual worldwide A&A Plans to ensure that acquisition planning appropriately includes opportunities for small businesses, particularly in requirements at \$25 million and above.

### **300.3.11.2 Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions**

Effective Date: 04/02/2013

Operating Units, in particular the Planner, must confirm that:

- The services to be procured do not include work that must be reserved for performance by Federal employees, and
- The Agency will be able to manage the contractor consistent with its responsibility to perform all inherently governmental functions and maintain control of its mission and operations (see [OMB Office of Federal Procurement Policy Letter 11-01, Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions](#) and [FAR 7.5](#)).

The Planner must provide documentation confirming that procurements above the simplified acquisition threshold comply with the requirements of the [OMB/OFPP Policy Letter 11-01, Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions](#). Accordingly, the Planner must complete and submit the Acquisition and Assistance [Template on Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions](#) to the Contracting Officer. This requirement does not apply to personal services contracts.

### **300.3.11.3 Individual Acquisition Plans (IAPs)**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

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In addition to entering all Acquisition and Assistance awards in the Agency A&A Plan, the [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(Part 7.102\)](#) requires agencies to perform acquisition planning and conduct market research at the individual acquisition level for certain awards. This section establishes when a written Individual Acquisition Plan (IAP) is required, who is responsible for preparing it, and its contents and format.

The Planner must prepare a written IAP for cost reimbursement, non-competitive, or time and materials or labor hour acquisitions (including IDIQs/IQCs and task orders). In the case of IDIQs and task orders, the Operating Unit and COs must also refer to [Acquisition Planning for Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity Contracts \(IDIQs\) and Task Orders \(TOs\)](#). The OU may determine that a written IAP is appropriate for other acquisitions.

Whether or not any IAPs are drafted, all acquisition awards signed by Contracting Officers with a total estimated cost at or above the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in FAR 2.101, must be entered into the Agency A&A Plan system.

When the total cost of the award, including any options, is \$10 million or more, the Planner must draft the IAP using the [Individual Acquisition Plan Template](#). When the total cost of the award, including any options, is less than \$10 million, the use of the IAP Template is optional; however, the Planner must prepare a written IAP that complies with the required contents specified in [FAR 7.105](#), as appropriate. The IAP must be approved one level above the Contracting Officer and the signed IAP must be sent to the CO along with the procurement request. An attorney may be asked to review and sign the IAP at the discretion of the acquisition team.

The Planner has overall responsibility for preparing the written IAP; however, an IAP requires the joint expertise of the program/project, technical, and contracting, and legal offices and must integrate the efforts of all personnel responsible for significant aspects of the acquisition. The entire acquisition team should participate throughout the planning process, from the initial draft of the statement of work/specifications to completion of the plan. If an Office of the General Counsel (GC) attorney or Resident Legal Officer (RLO) will be asked to review and sign the IAP, the relevant RLO or GC/A&A attorney must be engaged early in the development of the IAP. The Planner and CO must work closely together to ensure the plan:

- Complies with the requirements in [FAR Part 7.105](#);
- Complies with statutory and regulatory requirements and the requirements in the [Office of Federal Procurement Policy Letter](#)

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**11-01 Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions**, and

- Demonstrates sound business judgment.

All IAPs must be prepared sufficiently in advance of the release of the solicitation, preferably at the project design stage (see [ADS 201](#)) to ensure that requirements are presented in a way that:

- Promotes full and open competition, and
- Provides sufficient time for the identification and resolution of impediments that could delay the acquisition or lead to increased cost or technical risk.

Written IAPs must contain acquisition background, objectives, and a plan of action. The scope of the written IAP will vary with the complexity and dollar value of the requirement. The IAP must be based on market research and must support the competitive process in accordance with [FAR Part 6](#) (as required in [FAR 7.103](#)). The IAP must take into consideration:

- Budgeting limitations,
- Whether the procurement may involve non-standard terms and conditions or the nature of the activities or procurement raise specific legal implication or concerns,
- Scheduling requirements,
- Estimated contract performance period necessary to meet mission needs, and
- Anticipated source selection techniques and evaluation criteria.

The following types of acquisitions must comply with the planning requirements in [FAR 7.102](#), but do not require written IAPs:

- (1) Fixed-Price Contracts;
- (2) Architect-engineering services;
- (3) Unsolicited proposals (when deemed innovative and unique in accordance with [FAR 15.5](#));

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- (4) Regulated utility services where services are available from only one source;
- (5) Acquisitions made from or through other Government agencies using Interagency Agreements ([ADS 306, Interagency Agreements](#)); and
- (6) Contract modifications which exercise an option, add funds to an incrementally funded contract, or make changes authorized by the Changes clause; provided that there is an IAP for the original action and there is no significant deviation from that plan.

#### **300.3.11.4 Additional Requirements for Information Technology**

Effective Date: 11/17/2016

M/CIO approval is required for all acquisitions that include a requirement for information technology (IT) for Agency use, regardless of the estimated dollar level. IT includes, but is not limited to, IT services, cloud computing services, software, hardware, mobile devices, and online subscriptions. Operating Units must contact M/CIO at [ITAuthorization@usaid.gov](mailto:ITAuthorization@usaid.gov) in order to request a review or approval of proposed acquisitions that include a requirement for IT for Agency use. The Operating Unit must also identify the proposed procurement on the Agency A& A plan by selecting “Yes” in the “containing IT” field. Planners must ensure that the acquisition plan contains sufficient information on the IT requirements under the award, as well as the relevant M/CIO approvals, to ensure that the CO includes the appropriate clauses and provisions in the award.

When planning acquisitions that include IT, the acquisition planner must perform market research consistent with [FAR Part 10](#). If the planned acquisition includes custom development of software solutions, the request for M/CIO approval must include documentation addressing how the acquisition planner determined that no Federal software solutions, commercial software solutions, or other non-developmental items exist or can be modified to satisfy the requirement (see [ADS 547maa, Limits on Custom-Developed Software](#) for further details regarding requirements for the acquisition of custom-developed software).

#### **300.3.12 Assistance Planning**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

For cost type assistance awards, the program manager/technical office must conduct similar and appropriate planning and document the actions taken, such as those related to market research, competition, local capacity development, sustainability, climate risk, etc., but are not required to prepare Individual Acquisition Plans (IAPs) in the format above.

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Whether or not any IAPs are drafted, all assistance awards signed by Agreement Officers with a total estimated cost at or above the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in FAR 2.101 must be entered into the Agency A&A Plan system before award.

### **300.3.13 Acquisition and Assistance Mandatory Templates**

Effective Date: 08/24/2016

The Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA) may periodically revise templates or add new ones to the list below and encourages Agency staff to submit suggestions for new templates and revisions to existing templates. Agency staff must continue to monitor this ADS chapter and the M/OAA Intranet [Acquisition & Assistance Mandatory Templates Web site](#).

To view the current mandatory templates available, please click on the heading in blue. The list of templates below in each section is for reference and illustrative purposes only.

#### **a. [Acquisition and Assistance](#)**

##### **PLANNING**

- (1) Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) Guide and Template  
IGCE Tutorial Video  
IGCE Guide and Template for Excel  
IGCE Excel Tutorial Video

- (2) Choice of Instrument Template for Contracting/Agreement Officers

#### **b. [Acquisition](#)**

##### **PLANNING**

- (1) Individual Acquisition Plan Template
- (2) Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions Analysis Guide and Template
- (3) Source Selection Plan Guidance and Template

##### **SOLICITATION**

- (1) IDIQ Template (GLAAS Template)

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(2) Ceilings on Labor Rates-Cost Analysis and Cost Realism  
Introduction Template

(3) Proposal Preparation Checklist

### **EVALUATION**

(1) Memorandum of Negotiations Acquisition Template Guide

(2) Technical Evaluation Committee Guide and Template

(3) Competitive Range Determination Template for Acquisition

(4) Cost Analysis Templates for Acquisition

(5) Cost Realism Checklist for Technical Evaluation Members

(6) Source Selection Decision Document Template for Acquisition-  
Tradeoff vs. Lowest Price Technically Acceptable

c. [Assistance](#)

### **PLANNING**

(1) Assistance Selection Plan Template and Guide

### **SOLICITATION**

(1) Notice of Funding Opportunity Guidance and Template for  
Assistance

### **EVALUATION**

(1) Assistance Selection Committee Template and Guide

(2) Assistance Cost Application Review Template and Guide

(3) Assistance Award Memorandum Template and Guide

## **300.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES**

### **300.4.1 External Mandatory References** Effective Date: 03/14/2016

a. [Clinger-Cohen Act](#)

*Text highlighted in yellow indicates that the material is new or substantively revised.*

- b. [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#)
- c. [FITARA, Subtitle D](#)
- d. [Office of Federal Procurement Policy \(OFPP\) Policy Letter 11-01, Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions](#)

**300.4.2 Internal Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

- a. [Acquisition & Assistance Mandatory Templates Website](#)
- b. [ADS 201, Program Cycle Operational Policy](#)
- c. [ADS 300man, Instructions and Template for Senior Obligation and Alignment Review \(SOAR\) Document](#)
- d. [ADS 300mar, Data Collection for Contingency Contracting](#)
- e. [ADS 300mas, Senior Obligation and Alignment Review \(SOAR\) Review Form](#)
- f. [ADS 302, USAID Direct Contracting](#)
- g. [ADS 303, Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations](#)
- h. [ADS 304, Selecting Between Appropriate Acquisition and Assistance Implementing Instruments](#)
- i. [ADS 306, Interagency Agreements](#)
- j. [ADS 547maa, Limits on Custom-Developed Software](#)

**300.4.3 Mandatory Forms**

Effective Date: 04/02/2013

- a. [Small Business Review Form](#)

**300.5 ADDITIONAL HELP**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

- a. [ADS 300saa, A&A Plan Page with Link to Web-based Training and Information](#)

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- b. [ADS 300sab, Senior Obligation Alignment Review: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- c. [ADS 300sad, Senior Obligation and Alignment Review \(SOAR\) Document Flowcharts](#)

### 300.6 DEFINITIONS

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

See the [ADS Glossary](#) for all ADS terms and definitions.

#### **administrative contract modification**

A unilateral contract change, in writing, that does not affect the substantive rights of the parties (e.g., a change in the paying office or the appropriation data). (**Chapter 300**)

#### **Agency Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Plan**

The Agency business system that documents all planned acquisition and assistance actions that are to be executed by a USAID contracting officer or agreement officer during a fiscal year and identifies milestones and tracks status in the acquisition or assistance process for each action. (**Chapter 300**)

#### **Agreement Officer** (see also Contracting Officer)

A person with the authority to (1) enter into, administer, terminate, and close out assistance agreements, and (2) make related determinations and findings on behalf of USAID. An Agreement Officer may only act within the scope of a duly authorized warrant or other valid delegation of authority. The term "Agreement Officer" includes persons warranted as "Grant Officers." It also includes certain authorized representatives of the Agreement Officer acting within the limits of their authority as delegated by the Agreement Officer. (**Chapters 300, [303](#), [304](#)**)

#### **assistance**

Financial support to accomplish a public purpose, including grants, cooperative agreements and other agreements in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Federal Government to an eligible recipient. The term does not include the provision of services instead of money; other assistance in the form of loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, or insurance; direct payments of any kind to individuals; or contracts which are required to be entered into and administered under procurement laws and regulations. (**Chapters 300, [303](#), [304](#)**)

#### **basic ordering agreement**

A written instrument of understanding, negotiated between an agency, contracting activity, or contracting office and a contractor, that contains (1) terms and clauses applying to future contracts (orders) between the parties during its term, (2) a description, as specific as practicable, of supplies or services to be

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provided, and (3) methods for pricing, issuing, and delivering future orders under the basic ordering agreement. A basic ordering agreement is not a contract. **(Chapter 300)**

#### **bilateral contract modification**

A contract modification that is signed by the contractor and the contracting officer that reflects the agreement of the parties to modify the term of the contract. **(Chapter 300)**

#### **Business Forecast**

Informs the public of competitive opportunities for a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement. The forecast is updated quarterly. **(Chapter 300)**

#### **contract**

A mutually binding legal relationship obligating the seller to furnish the supplies or services (including construction) and the buyer to pay for them. It includes all types of commitments that obligate the Government to an expenditure of appropriated funds and that, except as otherwise authorized, are in writing. In addition to bilateral instruments, contracts include (but are not limited to) awards and notices of awards; job orders or task letters issued under basic ordering agreements; letter contracts; orders, such as purchase orders, under which the contract becomes effective by written acceptance or performance; and bilateral contract modifications. Contracts do not include grants and cooperative agreements covered by 31 U.S.C. 6301, et seq. For discussion of various types of contracts, see FAR Part 16. **(Chapter 300 and [331](#))**

#### **Contracting Officer (CO)**

A person representing the U.S. Government through the exercise of his or her delegated authority to enter into, administer, and terminate contracts and make related determinations and findings. This authority is delegated by one of two methods: to the individual by means of a "Certificate of Appointment", SF 1402, as prescribed in FAR 1.603-3, including any limitations on the scope of authority to be exercised, or to the head of each contracting activity (as defined in AIDAR 702.170), as specified in AIDAR 701.601. **(Chapters 300, [302](#), [331](#))**

#### **Contracting Officer Representative (COR)/Agreement Officer Representative (AOR)**

The individual who performs functions that are designated by the Contracting or Agreement Officer, or are specifically designated by policy or regulation as part of contract or assistance administration. **(Chapter 300)**

#### **cooperative agreement**

A legal instrument used where the principal purpose is the transfer of money, property, services or anything of value to the recipient in order to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute and

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where substantial involvement by USAID is anticipated. (**Chapters 300, [303](#), [304](#)**)

### **critical function**

A function that is necessary to the agency being able to effectively perform and maintain control of its mission and operations. Typically, critical functions are recurring and long-term in duration. (**Chapter 300**)

### **Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)**

The primary document containing the uniform policies and procedures for all executive agencies for the acquisition of supplies and services with Congressional appropriations. It is Chapter 1 of Title 48, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). (**Chapters 300, [302](#), [330](#)**)

### **Field Support**

The Agency process whereby Field Operating Units may elect to obtain services, obtain technical assistance, or purchase commodities through awards that have been procured in Washington and are managed by A/CORs in the Pillar Bureaus. Operating units may use New Obligation Authority (NOA) funds or funds carried forward from the previous fiscal year, as well as funds bilaterally obligated in the field that will be sub-obligated into the Pillar Bureau-managed awards. All field support funding must be planned and coordinated in the Field Support System, FS-AID. FS-AID is a web-based system through which all field support transactions are planned by missions, authorized for commitment by missions and regional bureaus, and compiled for action in GLAAS by Pillar Bureaus. (**Chapter 300**)

### **governmental function**

A function that is so intimately related to the public interest as to require performance by Federal Government employees. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter 11-01 provides additional information and a list of functions considered to be inherently governmental. (**Chapter 300**)

### **grant**

A legal instrument used where the principal purpose is the transfer of money, property, services or anything of value to the recipient in order to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute and where substantial involvement by USAID is not anticipated. (**Chapters 300, [303](#), [304](#), [591](#), [595](#)**)

### **information technology (IT)**

As defined in [M-15-14: Management and Oversight of Federal Information Technology Resources](#), Information technology includes:

- a. Any services or equipment, or interconnected system(s) or subsystem(s) of equipment, that are used in the automatic acquisition, storage,

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analysis, evaluation, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information by the agency; where

- b. such services or equipment are “used by an agency” if used by the agency directly or if used by a contractor under a contract with the agency that requires either use of the services or equipment or requires use of the services or equipment to a significant extent in the performance of a service or the furnishing of a product.
- c. The term "information technology" includes computers, ancillary equipment (including imaging peripherals, input, output, and storage devices necessary for security and surveillance), peripheral equipment designed to be controlled by the central processing unit of a computer, software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including provisioned services such as cloud computing and support services that support any point of the lifecycle of the equipment or service), and related resources.
- d. The term "information technology" does not include any equipment that is acquired by a contractor incidental to a contract that does not require use of the equipment.

(Chapters [300](#), [518](#), [519](#), [541–548](#), [552](#), [577](#))

### **information technology resources**

As defined in M-15-14: Management and Oversight of Federal Information Technology Resources, information technology resources includes all:

- a. Agency budgetary resources, personnel, equipment, facilities, or services that are primarily used in the management, operation, acquisition, disposition, and transformation, or other activity related to the lifecycle of information technology;
- b. Acquisitions or interagency agreements that include information technology and the services or equipment provided by such acquisitions or interagency agreements; but
- c. Does not include grants to third parties which establish or support information technology not operated directly by the Federal Government.

(Chapters [300](#), [519](#), [541](#), [542](#))

### **institutional support mechanism**

Non-personal service contracts and agreements that provide personnel or otherwise support Agency operations. This may include institutional contracts

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that provide staff or services or interagency agreements such as PASAs, PAPAs, CASUs and fellow agreements. (**Chapter 300**)

### **interagency agreement**

Any agreement between two Federal agencies by which one agency buys goods or services from the other, including but not limited to an agreement under the authority of FAA section 632(b), the Economy Act, the Government Management Reform Act or similar legislation, or by which one agency transfers or allocates funds to another under the authority of FAA section 632(a).

(**Chapter 300** and [306](#))

### **information technology (IT)**

“(1) Any services or equipment, or interconnected system(s) or subsystem(s) of equipment, that are used in the automatic acquisition, storage, analysis, evaluation, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information by the agency; where (2) such services or equipment are 'used by an agency' if used by the agency directly or if used by a contractor under a contract with the agency that requires either use of the services or equipment or requires use of the services or equipment to a significant extent in the performance of a service or the furnishing of a product. (3) The term "information technology" includes computers, ancillary equipment (including imaging peripherals, input, output, and storage devices necessary for security and surveillance), peripheral equipment designed to be controlled by the central processing unit of a computer, software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including provisioned services such as cloud computing and support services that support any point of the lifecycle of the equipment or service), and related resources. (4) The term "information technology" does not include any equipment that is acquired by a contractor incidental to a contract that does not require use of the equipment.” (**Chapter 300**)

### **information technology resources**

Any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. It includes, but is not limited to, "computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services) and related resources". (**Chapters 300, [519](#), [541](#), [542](#), [546](#)**)

### **letter contract**

A written preliminary contractual instrument that authorizes the contractor to begin immediately manufacturing supplies or performing services. (**Chapter 300**)

### **market research**

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The process of collecting and analyzing information about capabilities within the market to satisfy Agency needs. (**Chapter 300**)

### **operating units**

USAID field Missions, regional entities, and USAID/Washington Offices that expend funds to support Agency program objectives. This definition particularly includes operating units performing the functions of formulating policy, strategic and budgetary planning, achieving results, procurement, personnel management, financial management, and statutory requirements. (**Chapters [204](#), [260](#), [300](#), [623](#)**)

### **Personal Services Contract**

A contract that, by its express terms or as administered, make the contractor personnel appear, in effect, Government employees (See FAR 37.104 and AIDAR Appendix D). (**Chapter 300**)

### **Planner**

The designated person responsible for developing and maintaining a written Individual Acquisition Plan (IAP), or for the planning function in those acquisitions (FAR 7.101) or assistance actions not requiring a written plan. The Planner may be the Project Design Team Leader or Project Manager, or his or her designee (**[ADS 201](#)**), such as the intended Contracting Officer/Agreement Officer Representative (COR/AOR), who will work with the CO/AO in carrying out the planning function. Operating Units (OUs) must ensure that a Planner is identified for a particular procurement. Though OUs have the discretion to determine the appropriate individual based on the organizational structure and functions of the unit, the Planner must be an individual with sufficient authority in the OU to ensure that planning complies with this chapter, FAR acquisition planning requirements, and OMB/OFPP Policy Letter 11-01 Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions. (**Chapter 300**)

### **priced order**

An order for supplies or services, the price of which is established at the time of issuance of the order. (**Chapter 300**)

### **Program Manager**

Senior member of a Development Objective Team or Mission Technical Office who is responsible for the management of an entire program, if not individual projects, activities and/or awards who may not be the same as the Program Manager designated in GLAAS. (**Chapter 300**)

### **Project Manager**

Individual designated by the Mission Director to coordinate all activities defined within the Project Appraisal Document. (**Chapter 300**)

### **purchase order (PO)**

*Text highlighted in yellow indicates that the material is new or substantively revised.*

A contractual agreement for small purchases of goods and services. (**Chapter 300**)

**Senior Obligation Alignment Review (SOAR) Document**

The form used to review and approve the issuance of solicitations for certain planned acquisition and assistance awards, cost-type agreements and program contributions with Public International Organizations, whether non-competitive awards or the result of solicitations. (**Chapter 300**).

**termination for convenience**

The exercise of the Government's right to completely or partially terminate performance of work under a contract when it is in the Government's interest. (**Chapter 300**)

**termination for default**

The exercise of the Government's right to completely or partially terminate a contract because of the contractor's actual or anticipated failure to perform its contractual obligations. (**Chapter 300**)

**unilateral contract modification**

A contract modification that is signed only by the contracting officer. (**Chapter 300**)

**unpriced order**

An order for supplies or services, the price of which is not established at the time of issuance of the order. (**Chapter 300**)

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