



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

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 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: 03/10/2021

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 and directives, 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 **was developed by following the requirements of ADS 201** and **will** contribute to the planning and documentation process defined in this ADS chapter.

### 300.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 03/10/2021

- a. The **Administrator** will provide approval to issue new solicitations at or above **\$100** million in total estimated cost/total estimated amount, whether non-competitive awards or the result of solicitations.
- b. The cognizant **Assistant Administrators** or **Independent Office Directors** will approve new planned solicitations with a total estimated cost/total estimated amount at or above **\$50** million and less than **\$100** million, whether via a competitive process or otherwise; and provide clearance for all A&A solicitations at or above **\$100** million, whether via a competitive process or 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 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

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

- A&A 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, preparing other pre-procurement documentation and obtaining all approvals listed in the sections below); and
- Identifying a Planner to receive and facilitate the review and approval of SOAR documents.

**f.** 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 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 Manager, **where a project approach is used ([ADS 201](#))**, **or the intended Contracting Officer's/Agreement Officer's Representative (COR/AOR), among other examples.** **The Planner works** with the CO/AO **to** carry 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).

**g. 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;

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- 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;
- 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); and
- Perform initial review of the key elements of the design (e.g., activity description, or initial drafts of scope of work/program description) before SOAR documentation is forwarded to the approving official for review and approval, notify the SOAR mailbox when the solicitation is posted, and upload the signed SOAR documents into the award file.

**h.** 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](#).

**i.** 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.

**j.** 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 A&A Plan and Business Forecast**

##### **300.3.1.1 Agency A&A Plan** Effective Date: 08/11/2020

USAID has developed a system for advanced Acquisition and Assistance planning, the Agency A&A Plan, which can be accessed via the Agency Intranet website 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

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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>.

**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);
  - Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs);
  - U.S. Personal Services Contracts;
  - Incremental Funding;
  - Award Extensions;
  - Increases in award Total Estimated Cost/Total Estimated Amount;

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- 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.
- Enter all cost-type agreements and project 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 (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.

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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 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;
- Within the A&A Planning Tool, COs/AOs must select “Yes” for the Business Forecast, when applicable. Additionally, CO/AOs, working with program and technical staff, must ensure that the information is regularly updated;
- 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.

#### **300.3.1.2 Agency A&A Plan Reviews**

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

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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 ad hoc 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, 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.

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

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

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 reviews all actions to determine the following:

- 1) If the action is, or 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 and select "Yes" or "No" in the Business Forecast field within the Agency A&A Plan.

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.

### **300.3.1.4 Selecting the Appropriate Instrument**

Effective Date: 04/02/2013

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 the Appropriate Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Instrument](#).

### **300.3.2 Agency A&A Yearly Planning Schedule and Fiscal Year Closing Date**

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

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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 and could result in these actions not being completed by the end of the fiscal year unless an adjustment is made in the A&A 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.

Action	Bureau/Office	Due Date
Commitment of Expiring Funds Com	Operating Units	NLT March 29
Expiring funds designated for field support planned and authorized in the Field Support Database	Mission Operating and Regional Bureau Program Offices	NLT May 30
Field support sub-obligations authorized in the Field Support Database	Mission Operating	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

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

**300.3.3 Procurement Action Lead Time (PALT)**  
 Effective Date: 03/10/2021

Contracting/Agreement Officers and technical offices must work together to establish realistic milestone schedules for full and open competitive actions of \$10 million or more in the Agency A&A Plan and tailor them to fit the individual action. The A&A Plan includes mandatory PALT milestones for the CO/AO to report and maintain. Additionally, the A&A Plan includes optional PALT milestone reporting. These

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schedules are an important accounting of the individual milestone events for actions to ensure timely awards.

The M Bureau will project and record the timeframes related to such pre-solicitation items as activity/project approval and senior leadership SOAR reviews. 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. If the design stage identifies that IT or IT resources are required in support of a contract, the program and technical offices must contact M/CIO at **ITAuthorization@usaid.gov** to pre-vet requirements and obtain conditional approval to proceed. The program and technical offices must also submit draft documentation with all applicable timeframes (for example, when the activity 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 technical staff on the dates that the CO/AO must enter for the solicitation through the award phase.

The estimated 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. Additionally, if a SOAR is required, the PALT will not begin until the CO/AO receives the approved SOAR document or notification from the Planner that the approval timeframe has lapsed.

As required by OMB, the CO must enter the "Solicitation Issue Date" in FPDS-NG to calculate PALT on actions above the simplified acquisition threshold. GLAAS does not auto-populate the solicitation issue date in FPDS-NG.

A complete GLAAS request for a new action must include the name of the Buyer before release. It must also include the following documents to the maximum extent practicable, but is not limited to:

- **An approved Activity Approval Memorandum (AAM)**, where required ([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;
- Statement of Work, Statement of Objectives or Performance-Based Work Statement for acquisition, or a Program Description for assistance, to be included

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in Section C of the solicitation or Section A of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), respectively. This is also sometimes referred to by the umbrella term, “Activity Description” (see [ADS 201](#));

- Solicitation language designating indicators that the contractor or recipient will be required to collect and report as part of the contractual deliverables or assistance performance goals. Where applicable, these indicators should be derived from the Mission-wide Performance Management Plan (PMP);
- 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;
- For Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) that will result in a cooperative agreement, language on the type of substantial involvement that is anticipated between USAID and the recipient ([ADS 304](#));
- An approved environmental compliance document such as an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), Request for Categorical Exemption (RCE), or Environmental Impact Assessment (EA) (per [ADS 201](#), [ADS 204](#), and [22 CFR 216](#));
- For acquisitions, documentation that procurements above the simplified acquisition threshold comply with the requirements of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Letter 11-01, and the [Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions Template](#);
- For acquisitions, a written Individual Acquisition Plan (IAP) if required per FAR Part 7;
- Market research documentation;
- Climate Risk Assessment, if required (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, IT approvals, and any others; and

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- 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
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

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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 and the timeframes listed in **300.3.2**. 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 must consider all Agency priorities, feasibility of timeline, and other planned workload considerations in order to complete actions required by the end of the current fiscal year.

**300.3.4 Senior Obligation Alignment Review of Planned A&A Solicitations and Proposed Cost-Type Agreements and Project Contributions with Public International Organizations**  
Effective Date: 03/10/2021

The Senior Obligation Alignment Review (SOAR) is USAID's process for engaging senior leadership in the review of certain proposed, high-dollar-value awards. SOAR 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 **activity** design and establishes greater linkages between Washington and field activities. The primary objectives of the SOAR review are to:

- Ensure USAID senior leadership knows about the major upcoming Agency acquisition and assistance solicitations;
- 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; and
- 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.

**300.3.4.1 SOAR Review Applicability**  
Effective Date: 03/10/2021

- a. The SOAR process applies as follows unless the activity meets one of the exceptions in paragraph (b):
- Solicitations for all new acquisition & assistance (A&A) awards (contracts, orders, grants, and cooperative agreements) require SOAR approval prior to release of the solicitation when the total estimated cost/amount, based on the

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independent government cost estimate, is expected to be \$50 million or more. The SOAR thresholds apply to the cumulative value of award(s) expected under the solicitation regardless of type or purpose of award(s), method of solicitation, and whether awarded competitively or otherwise. If the value at solicitation stage is unknown, as may be the case with Annual Program Statements (APS) and Broad Agency Announcements (BAA), a SOAR must be approved as soon as it is known that the cumulative amount of funding will reach the threshold.

- New interagency agreements (IAA) require SOAR approval prior to award when the amount of the agreement is \$50 million or more.
- Any other awards or solicitations designated for SOAR review by the Administrator or Assistant Administrator (AA). This may include solicitations or agreements related to high profile presidential initiatives and activities of specific interest, e.g., activities in countries the Administrator is scheduled to visit. In this case, the Executive Secretariat (ES) or the office of the AA will notify the Planner that SOAR review is required.

The SOAR review process does not apply to any other types of solicitations or agreements that are not specified above, including but not limited to Government-to-Government, bilateral development partner agreements, PIOs, and host-country contracts.

**b. Exceptions.** SOAR review and approval is not required when one of the following exceptions apply:

- New solicitations or awards for which an exception to competition was approved by the Assistant Administrator or Administrator that documents in the Action Memo how the proposed award addresses the areas covered by the SOAR review.
- Food for Peace emergency food aid.
- Activities of the Office of Transition Initiatives (CPS/OTI) that the Director, CPS/OTI has determined are urgent.
- Any other new solicitation(s) or award(s), regardless of funding source, that the responsible Office Director has determined are related to urgently needed humanitarian assistance. 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.
- Any new award based on an exception to competition authorized in an Expedited Procedures Package (EPP).

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**300.3.4.2 SOAR Approval Authority**

Effective Date: 03/10/2021

When the requirement for SOAR review applies, the Operating Unit (OU) must determine the authorized SOAR approval official based on the criteria below:

- a. The Administrator is the authorized SOAR approval official for the following:
  - Solicitations for new acquisition & assistance (A&A) awards as described in **300.3.4.1(a)** that have an estimated value of **\$100** million or more.
  - New interagency agreements (IAA) as described in **300.3.4.1(a)** that are valued at **\$100** million or more.
  - Any other awards or solicitations as described in **300.3.4.1(a)** that the ES has identified for review by the Administrator.
  
- b. The Assistant Administrator (AA) or Independent Office (IO) Director, who has responsibility (see [ADS 101, Agency Programs and Functions](#)) for the OU that initiated the request, is the authorized SOAR approval official for the following:
  - Solicitations for new acquisition & assistance (A&A) awards as described in **300.3.4.1(a)** that have an estimated value at or above **\$50** million but less than **\$100** million.
  - New interagency agreements (IAA) as described in **300.3.4.1(a)** that are valued at or above **\$50** million but less than **\$100** million.
  - Any other awards or solicitations as described in **300.3.4.1(a)** that the office of the AA has identified for review.
  
- c. Individuals who are serving in an acting capacity for the authorized SOAR approval official may sign SOAR documents consistent with authorities outlined in [ADS 103, Delegations of Authority](#). In the absence of the authorized SOAR approval official, a Deputy with alter ego authority in accordance with [ADS 103.3.6](#) may also provide SOAR approvals. The approval of SOAR documents may not be otherwise delegated.

**300.3.4.3 SOAR Request Package**

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

The Planner within the OU responsible for the activity must prepare the SOAR request package as early in the planning process as practicable. Processing the SOAR request does not require a full draft solicitation or proposed agreement but should not occur

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before the CO/AO receives a draft concept, statement of work or program description, evaluation or selection criteria, and independent government cost estimate. If a SOAR request contains any IT or IT resources, it is strongly recommended that the IT component be pre-vetted with M/CIO prior to the submission of the SOAR request package.

The contents and required format of the request package are as follows:

- 1) An Action Memo requesting approval to proceed with the action and clearance sheet listing all required clearances in accordance with **300.3.4.4**. The action memo must follow the Action Memo template found under [ES Memo Templates](#).
- 2) The SOAR Document, which includes Part 1 - Standard Descriptive Data and Part 2 - Justification, must be prepared in accordance with the format and directions contained in the [Instructions and Template for SOAR Document](#). The Planner must address the mandatory—and any applicable optional—questions identified in the template. The descriptive data in Part 1 of the template must be no more than three sentences for each field, and the justification provided in Part 2 must be no more than five pages. The Planner must include in the SOAR document the names of all Washington staff who provided technical assistance during the activity design.

The Planner must not submit supporting documentation (e.g., IAP) unless specifically requested. The OU may determine what internal clearances are required, but the SOAR package may not be submitted for approval until the Planner has first obtained clearance from the Mission Director or Head of the Operating Unit.

#### **300.3.4.4 Process for Requesting SOAR Approval**

Effective Date: 03/10/2021

The completed SOAR request package must be submitted to the designated B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison, with a copy to the SOAR Secretariat at [soar@usaid.gov](mailto:soar@usaid.gov). 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, tracking timelines, and responding to inquiries. If any approving officials raise 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 for AA level approval and five business days for Administrator level approval. The SOAR Secretariat will report lengthy delays to AA/M for resolution.

The B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison will manage the USAID/Washington consultation/clearance process for the SOAR package. In order for the SOAR Secretariat to monitor the SOAR process, the B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison must copy the SOAR Secretariat at [soar@usaid.gov](mailto:soar@usaid.gov) at each step of the clearance and approval process. The list of SOAR Liaisons can be found [here](#).

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The process for obtaining SOAR clearances and approval is as follows:

- 1) Responsible B/IO clearances. The responsible 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, Technical Officer who participated in the design process, Program Officer, and Deputy Assistant Administrator).
- 2) **Pillar/relevant Regional Bureaus and Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business (OSDBU) comments.** Unless one of the exceptions below applies, simultaneous with obtaining clearances in the initiating Bureau, the Responsible SOAR Liaison must forward the SOAR package to each of the Pillar Bureaus, relevant Regional Bureaus (when the A&A activity is initiated by a Pillar Bureau and will be implemented within one country or region), and OSDBU, for comment. The Responsible SOAR Liaison must also **copy** the SOAR **Secretariat (soar@usaid.gov)** and the **Office of Budget and Resource Management (brmtaskerlist@usaid.gov)**.

Exceptions: The Responsible SOAR Liaison is not required to send SOAR documents for comment to Pillar/Regional Bureaus for operational activities (e.g., information technology, financial services, audit services, etc.). The Responsible SOAR Liaison is also not required to send SOAR documents for comment to Pillar/Regional Bureaus for time-sensitive activities (including, but not limited to, President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) activities; crisis activities, as determined by the AA, that are not funded by Humanitarian Assistance; activities funded with expiring funds during the last quarter of the fiscal year; activities deemed essential in the event of a lapse in appropriations; **and activities in which 51 percent or more of the funding for the award is COVID-19-related**).

When providing comments, Pillar/Regional Bureaus and OSDBU reviewers must self-identify (name, office, and title) within each comment, the comments must be clearly labeled as "Substantive" or "Advisory", and must include proposed solutions; otherwise, the Planner or Responsible SOAR Liaison may disregard the comments and move the document to the next stage. Before raising any substantive issues, the reviewers must consult with Washington staff listed by the Planner as having provided technical assistance during activity/project design. Reviewers will have no more than five business days from the day after receipt to provide comments.

- 3) Review of comments and feedback **from Pillar/Regional Bureaus and OSDBU.** The B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison must work with the Planner to consider comments and feedback and make any necessary revisions to the SOAR package within five business days. The Planner or the Responsible SOAR Liaison must list at the end of the [\*\*Instructions and Template for SOAR\*\*](#)

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**Document** any unresolved comments generated during the five-day review period, labeled as “Substantive,” that included a solution.

- 4) **Updating the Action Memo.** The Planner and the B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison must update the background section of the Action Memo stating whether comment/no comment/no response was provided by the Pillar/relevant Regional Bureaus.

**Note:** If the Approving Official is the AA/IO Director, skip steps 5 and 6 as they only apply to requests for Administrator approval.

- 5) **For Administrator-level SOARs,** when requesting AA/IO clearance, the B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison must include the **following** in the SOAR package: 1) Action Memo with clearance sheet; 2) **Instructions and Template for SOAR Document**; and forward it to the cognizant AA/IO for clearance, copying **soar@usaid.gov**. The AA/IO Director will have three business days from the day after receipt to provide clearance or raise any substantive issues.
- 6) Obtaining M Bureau, Office of the General Counsel (GC), and OSDBU clearances (only for SOAR requests that must be approved by the Administrator). After AA/IO Director clearance, the Responsible SOAR Liaison must forward the SOAR package for clearance by AA/M, GC, and the Director of OSDBU, copying **soar@usaid.gov**. These clearing officials will have three business days from the day after receipt to provide clearance or offer any substantive comments.
- 7) Requesting Approval. After incorporating any changes, the B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison will then forward the SOAR package to the Authorized SOAR Approval Official and the Planner, copying **soar@usaid.gov**.

If the AA/IO Director is the Authorized SOAR Approval Official, 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 does not respond within three business days, the Planner must note on the SOAR document that the three business days have lapsed and proceed with the next action. If the AA 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 business days. The Responsible SOAR Liaison must notify the SOAR Secretariat at **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.

If the Administrator is the Authorized SOAR Approval Official, all communication will be directed through the Executive Secretariat (ES). The SOAR request package must not include supporting documentation (e.g., IAP) unless specifically requested. ES will return any SOAR documents that do not meet the

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requirements outlined in the [Instructions and Template for SOAR Document](#) or do not include the required clearances.

If the Authorized SOAR Approval Official is the Administrator, the Administrator will have 14 business days from the day after ES receives a completed SOAR package to raise substantive issues or approve the SOAR document. At the Administrator's discretion, a review panel may be convened during this 14-day timeframe. If the Administrator requests a review meeting, the panel may include the AA/M, the Director of M/OAA, the Director of OSDDBU, the General Counsel, a representative from the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), and ES. The responsible AA, Mission Director (if applicable), and other staff deemed appropriate by the Bureau could also receive an invitation. ES will send a tasker through the responsible AA if follow-up is needed after the Administrator's review of a SOAR package (see [ADS 300sad, SOAR Document Flowcharts](#)), copying [soar@usaid.gov](mailto:soar@usaid.gov). 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 raises substantive issues and/or requests a review meeting, the clock will stop until substantive issues are addressed. If substantive issues are raised, B/IO/Missions will have five business days to respond to Agency Front Office comments. 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 the SOAR Secretariat at [soar@usaid.gov](mailto:soar@usaid.gov) when the clock stops and starts. ES will also note the dates on the approval page. Once Administrator approval is obtained, ES returns the SOAR document to the B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison.

- 8) After the Authorized SOAR Approval Official has approved the SOAR (or if three business days have lapsed for packages for which the AA/IO Director is the Authorized SOAR Approval Official), the B/IO Responsible SOAR Liaison must send notification to the Planner to proceed to the next step in the process.
- 9) If there is a substantive change to an approved SOAR document, the Planner must notify the Authorized SOAR Approval Official for review and approval of the change.
- 10) The Planner must forward the approved SOAR document to the CO/AO. The CO/AO will not issue a solicitation, make any final requirement documents available, or execute an award subject to SOAR per section 300.3.4.1 without the approval of the Responsible SOAR Approval Official, or written notification from the Planner that the timeframe for approval has lapsed. The CO/AO must upload the approved SOAR document to the award file in ASIST.
- 11) The CO/AO must notify the SOAR mailbox at [soar@usaid.gov](mailto:soar@usaid.gov) when the solicitation is posted to the government-wide point of entry ([sam.gov](http://sam.gov) and/or

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grants.gov). At this point, the SOAR Secretariat completes the tracking process and closes its file. The Planner is not required to copy the SOAR Secretariat on communications after this point.

- 12) Completed SOAR packages for programs included in Country Operational Plans for PEPFAR approved by the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator must move through the process described above in no more than 30 days from initial submission.

#### **300.3.4.5 Post Award Requirements**

Effective Date: 03/10/2021

- a. Upon issuance of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements greater than or equal to \$50 million, the Contracting/Agreement Officer must forward the Congressional Award Notice (commonly referred to as the LEG Notice) that was sent to LPA to the cognizant Assistant Administrator, ES, and [soar@usaid.gov](mailto: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](#)).
- b. If pre-solicitation SOAR approval was not obtained because the estimated value based on the IGCE did not meet the SOAR approval threshold, but the actual value at award(s) does exceed the threshold, the OU must notify the appropriate approval official. If SOAR approval was provided by the AA/IO Director based on the estimated value of the solicitation, but the actual award(s) amount is \$50 million or above, the OU must notify ES.

#### **300.3.5 Specific Requirements for Acquisition Awards**

##### **300.3.5.1 Small Business Review**

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

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 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 source sought notice in System for Award Management (SAM) 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

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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.

### **300.3.5.2 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.

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

Effective Date: 06/27/2018

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

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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, 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 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, Program Cycle Operational Policy](#)) 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.

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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 implications 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](#));
- 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.

#### **300.3.5.4 Additional Requirements for Information Technology**

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

As outlined in [ADS 509, Management and Oversight of Agency Information Technology Resources](#) and in accordance with [FITARA](#), CIO approval is required for all acquisitions that include a requirement for information technology (IT) used by the

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Agency, 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 used by the Agency (see [ADS 509.3.1 and 509.3.4.2](#) for further details). 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).

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

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

The Contract Review Board must review solicitation and award documents for acquisitions at or above a total estimated cost of \$25 million. The CRB does not review actions associated with the execution of Task Orders or awards resulting from Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs). Policies, procedures and parameters for CRB reviews appear in [ADS 302, USAID Direct Contracting](#) 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.

### **300.3.7 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.

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

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

In an effort to streamline procurement processes, a series of [Templates, Guidance and Samples](#) 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.

The 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 Templates; Personal Service Contract (PSC) Templates; and Assistance Templates and can be found on the M/OAA Intranet [Templates, Guidance and Samples](#).

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 [Templates, Guidance and Samples](#) for new or revised templates.

## **300.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES**

### **300.4.1 External Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 08/11/2020

- a. [Clinger-Cohen Act](#)
- b. [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#)
- c. [FITARA, Title VIII, Subtitle D](#)
- d. [M-15-14, Management and Oversight of Federal Information Technology](#)
- e. [Office of Federal Procurement Policy \(OFPP\) Policy Letter 11-01, Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions](#)

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**300.4.2 Internal Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 03/10/2021

- a. [Acquisition & Assistance Mandatory Templates Website](#)
- b. [ADS 201, Program Cycle Operational Policy](#)
- c. [ADS 300mak, Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions Template](#)
- d. [ADS 300man, Instructions and Template for Senior Obligation Alignment Review \(SOAR\) Document](#)
- e. [ADS 300mar, Data Collection for Contingency Contracting](#)
- f. [ADS 300mat, Guidance for Broad Agency Announcements](#)
- g. [ADS 302, USAID Direct Contracting](#)
- h. [ADS 303, Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations](#)
- i. [ADS 304, Selecting the Appropriate Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Instrument](#)
- j. [ADS 306, Interagency Agreements](#)
- k. [ADS 308, Agreements with Public International Organizations](#)
- l. [ADS 509, Management and Oversight of Agency Information Technology Resources](#)
- m. [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: 03/10/2021

- 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 Alignment Review \(SOAR\) Document Flowcharts](#)

**300.6**      **DEFINITIONS**  
Effective Date: 03/10/2021

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 provided, and

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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**)

**buyer**

A term used in GLAAS systems interchangeably with “A&A Specialist.” (**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

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support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute and 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, analysis,

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

- 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](#))

#### **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](#))

#### **institutional support mechanism**

Non-personal service contracts and agreements that provide personnel or otherwise support Agency operations. This may include institutional contracts that provide staff or services or interagency agreements such as PASAs, PAPAs, CASUs and fellow agreements. (**Chapter 300**)

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**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](#))

**letter contract**

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

**market research**

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

**Operating Units (OUs)**

The organizational unit responsible for implementing a foreign assistance program for one or more elements of the Department of State's Foreign Assistance Framework. The definition includes all U.S. Government agencies implementing any funding from the relevant foreign assistance accounts (the 150 accounts). For USAID, it includes field Missions and regional entities, as well as Regional Bureaus, Pillar Bureaus, and Independent Offices in USAID/Washington that expend program funds to achieve DOs identified in a CDCS. In Chapter 201, field OUs are referred to as "Missions", and those in Washington are referred to as "Washington OUs." (**Chapters [201](#), [260](#), [300](#), [304](#), [436](#), [540](#), [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 Manager, **where a project approach is used ([ADS 201](#)), or the intended Contracting Officer/Agreement Officer Representative (COR/AOR), among other examples. The Planner works** with the CO/AO **to** carry 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**)

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**priced order**

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

**Project Manager**

A designated individual who is responsible for providing overall guidance and direction at the project level during project implementation. The Project Manager may be an Office Director, Team Leader, or COR/AOR, among other options. As this is a function in the Mission, rather than a formal position in the Mission's staffing pattern, the designated Project Manager might or might not have formal supervisory authorities over technical staff. (**Chapter 201 and 300**)

**Public International Organization (PIO)**

An international organization that appears on the List of Public International Organizations or has otherwise been designated in accordance with the terms of [ADS Chapter 308](#). (**Chapter 300, 308**)

**purchase order (PO)**

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, 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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