

DISA Leadership in Action Additional Questions and Answers

Q: Other than sending our capability statement to the agency small business and the prime small business offices, what steps should we take towards getting a contract with DISA?

A: Do your homework. Know what the forecast is and how it matches to your company's strengths and core competencies. Find the best match and submit a proposal. You will never get a contract with DISA unless you propose on a requirement. Choose a Best-Value Trade-off solicitation vice a Lowest Price Technically Acceptable solicitation. If you are not selected for award, ask the Contracting Office for a debriefing so you can evaluate how you did and what changes to your future proposals may be necessary to win a contract with DISA. For subcontracting opportunity, ask the prime contractor for feedback as to why you did not win the subcontract.

Q: In today's environment, being "JUST" a SB or just a Veteran Owned Small Business doesn't seem to be enough. What does DISA plan for those companies that are in the "JUST" category?

A: Being in a federally designated category can provide for an advantage when a requirement is set aside which would limit the offerors who can propose. However, being in any category is not enough. The offerors must be good at what they do in relation to the requirement at hand, and they must be able to convey the capabilities in a proposal to win a contract.

Q: How would you recommend that we build our company's past performance with DISA? Is there any certifications or clearance we need before starting to work with DISA?

A: Most of DISA's solicitations, if the contracting officer decides to evaluate past performance, allow for the use of any type of past performance as it relates to the instant procurement, meaning that you do not have to have DISA-specific experience. One suggestion would be to work as a subcontractor on existing contracts to understand how DISA operates. Generally, our solicitations require a Facility Site Clearance. Currently, some of our solicitations require Cybersecurity Maturity Model Integration certifications. In the future, our solicitations will require Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification certifications.

Q: Recently, Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization decided that a very large opportunity called TRI-GSM would be released as a small business set aside. Do you mind letting us know at what level these types of decisions are ultimately made (Mr. Packard's level or Ordering Contracting Officer or somewhere in between) and the types of things that DITCO looks at when deciding to release an opportunity as a set aside when the value is \$450M+ over a five year period?

A: The acquisition decisions are made by the Contracting Officer or higher with concurrence from the Office of Small Business Programs (and if not set-aside, the Small Business Administration), and above \$100M approved by the DISA Senior procurement executive. For all requirements, we use Market Research and contract history (e.g., has the requirement been successfully fulfilled by a small business) to make acquisition decisions.

Q: What is the forecast for small business set-aside opportunities for Cybersecurity services – Identity Credential, and Access Management, Risk Management Framework, etc.?

A: See: <https://disa.mil/NewsandEvents/Events/Forecast-to-Industry-2020>

Q: Do WOSB need to be on the (ENCORE or Systems Engineering Technology and Innovation) vehicles to obtain these awards?

A: Neither ENCORE III or SETI has the ability to set aside task orders for specific socio-economic set-asides within the small business pool. If contract holders are Women Owned Small Business, they are required to be registered in SAM.gov as a WOSB for DISA to get this credit when the WOSB is awarded a task order.

Q: Will a re-certification be required under the WOSB?

A: The certification rules are the responsibility of the SBA and we will follow their requirements.

For WOSB/EDWOSB's that were previously "self-certified" under the prior program, certification is now required; previous "self-certification" is no longer applicable after 15 October 2020. All WOSB/EDWOSB can submit their certification applications through the SBA website (below) or through one of the approved Third Party Certifiers. As directed by NDAA 2015, WOSB/EDWOSB Program Participants must be certified as a WOSB or certified EDWOSB, by the SBA or an SBA Approved Third Party Certifier.

Also, the WOSB/EDWOSB has to be certified prior to contract award. If an apparent successful offeror has a pending application, the SBA would expedite their application in 15 days.

Q: Question regarding the WOSB certification: The U.S. Women's Chamber Commerce charges for a certification, but the SBA is free. What is the difference between the third-party certification and SBA certification?

A: Both achieve the same desired results of the certification. The SBA's certification is at no cost while the Third Party Certifiers charge a fee.

Q: We have seen what appears to be a deliberate shift in acquisition strategy for DISA -- an increased use of ENCORE III and SETI rather than the contract vehicles through which SBs won their incumbent work. How will DISA ensure a fair opportunity for such SB incumbents to compete for future work when they are not on ENCORE or SETI?

A: ENCORE III and SETI are "first look" contracts and are considered before other contract vehicles; this has always been the case for ENCORE and will be for SETI as a new contract vehicle. Market Research is conducted for all requirements to determine or support the acquisition decision. It should be noted that the Government is not required to ensure that an incumbent is eligible to compete on re-compete actions. Some requirements awarded on other contract vehicles were previously procured through the ENCORE II contract vehicle. However, due to ordering periods not overlapping between ENCORE II and III, the task orders requiring a five-year performance period were competed using other contract vehicle to ensure the full requirements were met.

Q: Could you state again, where WOSB can get industry certified?

A: <https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/women-owned-small-business-federal-contracting-program>

Q: So that I am clear, I am currently Women's Business Enterprise National Council WOSB certified. Is any additional action required of me?

A: For DISA contracts, the WOSB / Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business certifications must be executed in accordance with SBA's regulations.

Q: Will DISA publish a listing of various opportunities/programs points of contact to facilitate office calls for capability presentations.

A: Procurement opportunities can be found: <https://www.disa.mil/NewsandEvents/Events/Forecast-to-Industry-2020>. Potential offerors can reach out to the DISA Corporate Connections office for assistance. Their information can be found on our website: <https://www.disa.mil/About/Industry-Partners> and select the last bullet, "Request a Meeting/Submit a Question."

Q: We are a SB 8(a) firm and have past performance working with DoD as a sub-contractor. We would like to present our capabilities as an IT service provider to certain DISA groups. What is the best approach for this?

A: Review the DISA Procurement Forecast: <https://www.disa.mil/NewsandEvents/Events/Forecast-to-Industry-2020>. Then, reach out to the DISA Corporate Connections office for assistance. Their information can be found on our website: <https://www.disa.mil/About/Industry-Partners> and select the last bullet, "Request a Meeting/Submit a Question."

Q: The work being solicited during this COVID period to small businesses mentioned in the briefing is it work being awarded through direct awards to being posted on SAM BETA or a certain Indefinite Delivery /Indefinite Quantity vehicle.

A: DISA's COVID requirements are being executed in all manners. We have issued many solicitations via NASA Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement as we have received a large number of hardware and software requirements. We have also utilized our internal IDIQs, external Government wide Acquisition Contracts, and General Services Administration Federal Supply Schedules.

Q: Could you also speak to becoming a "possessing" facility. The same chicken/egg issue applies.

A: We do not have any information regarding how to get the possessing of materials added to your Facility Site Clearance FCL. We defer you to <https://www.dcsa.mil/mc/pv/fso/> for more information.

Q: My business niche is professional staffing services in IT and Office & Administrative Support Services. Does DISA purchase these type of services? If so, can you provide POC?

A: DISA executes contracts for Professional Support Services for IT but not necessarily through staffing services. We execute contracts to provide the services to DISA or our Mission Partners. These opportunities can be found on our Forecast.

Q: Thank you for hosting this event! Not sure if this is appropriate time to ask, but for SBs not on SETI or ENCORE, when is the next "On ramp" since those are the two primary vehicles used by DISA? Do these vehicles have rolling admissions similar to Seaport Next Generation?

A: This question was answered in the second session and those answers are posted to the Fort Meade Alliance website. These vehicles do not have rolling admissions; if they provide for an official on-ramping event that will be posted on beta.sam.gov.

Q: What will be the key focus areas for FY21 in reference to the DISA strategy?

A: DISA's Strategic Plan for FY19-FY22 is posted on disa.mil. Focus areas have not changed.

Q: What sources does DITCO use for market research?

A: DITCO uses all sources of information available, including results of Sources Sought Notices, contract history, DISA's market research database, professional knowledge, and the Dynamic Small Business Search. It should be noted that a Sources Sought Notice and/or Request for Information are not required for most acquisitions.

Q: Where is the agency with Service-Disable Veteran Owned Small Business?

A: As of 31 July 2020, DISA has awarded \$224M to SDVOSB. This is 4.2% and our goal is 5%.

Q: Regarding price realism - if that is not being evaluated isn't price still a factor in determining program risk. Low-ball pricing presents significant program execution risk....

A: Price is a factor in all source selections. As each requirement is unique, Contracting Officers carefully consider which evaluation approach, including how cost/price will be evaluated, is most appropriate for their acquisition on a case by case basis.

Q: How can businesses work with DISA to include a component on RFPs that is currently not included? For example, encryption key management is not a criteria ever considered as part of cybersecurity. Historically, we see modifications occur as an afterthought or patch to solve a problem. Sometimes this can be at a higher cost to the Government.

A: Reach out to our Corporate Connections office for assistance in discussing this topic with requirements owners who would include this requirement in the Performance Work Statement. Their information can be found on our website: <https://www.disa.mil/About/Industry-Partners> and select the last bullet, "Request a Meeting/Submit a Question." Additionally, the question can be brought up to the Contracting Officer during the solicitation phase.

Q: How do you leverage DreamPort? Is DreamPort useful to DISA?

A: DISA is using Dreamport for postings of our Other Transaction Authority s as well as for our Technical Exchange Meetings.

Q: Some recent Best Value acquisitions at DISA seem to be being "converted" to LPTA, through technical leveling. The RFPs' Section M ranks Price as lowest priority, but all offerors Tech Solution and Past Performance are scored merely "adequate" so Cost becomes the single determining factor. Bid decisions hinge on acquisition strategy, so should all acquisitions be considered essentially LPTA?

A: No. If all proposals are evaluated to have the same ratings, for example, acceptable, then the only difference is the price, and price does become the distinguishing factor among the offerors. DISA does not technically level proposals. Typically, in order for a proposal to be rated above Green/Acceptable, the proposal must meet the higher rating definitions which state the proposal contains at least one strength. In order for a proposal to be considered to have a strength, it must meet the definition of "strength" outlined in the solicitation. This definition typically reads, "**Strength** is an aspect of an offeror's proposal/quotation that has merit or exceeds specified performance or capability requirements in a way that will be advantageous to the Government during contract performance."

Q: How can a subcontractor go from sub to prime?

A: In order to become a prime contractor, the subcontractor needs to submit proposals in response to prime contractor opportunities that best fit their capabilities.

Q: Any update on Next Generation Enterprise Mobility Management? Thank you.

A: The Next Generation Load Device-Medium (NGLD-M) Engineering Development, Production, and Sustainment requirement will be solicited for an award by the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Q: On the new awards for SETI can subs be added now or do they have to wait for an on-ramp?

A: Subcontractors can be added at any time in both the small business suite as well as the full & open suite. A list of SETI and ENCORE III prime contracts and their contacts for subcontracting can be found: <https://disa.mil/About/Small-Business/Do-Business-with-DISA> - under "DISA Premier Contracting Vehicles." Click on the links for each contract.

Q: Can you ask if DISA uses National Security Agency for processing clearances and if not can they provide a POC in their security department at DISA.

A: DISA does not use NSA for processing clearances. Our clearances are processed through the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (www.dcsa.mil).

Q: DISA has removed the size standard column from its forecast. This makes it very difficult and time consuming for small businesses to identify and target upcoming small business procurements. Why was it removed, and will DISA consider putting it back in the forecast?

A: The “Anticipated Strategy” column was removed and not the size standard column. The size standard is still included. DISA removed the “Anticipated Strategy” column as it was generally the current strategy and not necessarily the anticipated strategy for the follow-on effort. Given that market research is necessary for every requirement, the strategy is not determined until after DITCO receives the acquisition package and market research is conducted and complete.

Q: When the forecast does not show a specific item and service, but we have been told by DISA small business that DISA buys 10's of thousands but not sure who we can speak to, what is the best way to uncover the requirements for these? For example mobile phone purchasing and secure trade-in?

A: Reach out to our Corporate Connections office for assistance. Their information can be found on our website: <https://www.disa.mil/About/Industry-Partners> and select the last bullet, “Request a Meeting/Submit a Question” and ask to speak with the Mobility section.

Q: For Mr. Packard: Is the Defense Enclave Services (DES) Draft Request For Proposal still expected to be released this month?

A: Yes.

Q: Aside from contacting Mr. Bennett directly, which can be overwhelming for his direct team, are there initial contact entry points for contractors for different products and services?

A: Reach out to our Corporate Connections office for assistance in identifying the specific requirements owners for the products and services you are wanting to sell to DISA. Their information can be found on our website: <https://www.disa.mil/About/Industry-Partners> and select the last bullet, “Request a Meeting/Submit a Question.”

Q: What process exists to challenge Brand Name Justifications? We often respond to solicitations with a competitive equivalent to for our competitors’ products at half the price but usually see invalid and inaccurate justification for the BNJ. That stifles our ability to provide less expensive competitive equivalents.

A: Brand Name (and Brand Name or Equal) requirements are based on market research, which may include Sources Sought Notices and/or Requests for Information. Please respond to ensure the requirements owner is aware of industry capabilities. In some cases, it is possible that an equivalent product would require extensive modification to a DoD network. Contact the contracting officer on specific requirements / solicitations.

Q: Mr. Packard: Thank you for the information about the different contract vehicles. As you mentioned, DISA utilizes a lot of vehicles. If the Forecast can include acquisition strategy (SB or LB) and contract vehicle that would help the industry very much to form teams to provide a better solution to DISA.

A: Given that market research is necessary for every requirement, the strategy is not finalized until after DITCO receives the acquisition package, and market research is conducted and complete. Therefore, often only the current acquisition’s strategy, not the future acquisition strategy is known when the Forecast is published.

Q: Will there be any reporting and or penalty for DISA SETI if small businesses (8A, Historically Under-utilized Business Zone etc.) are not fully utilized in a team?

A: Yes. Prime contractors not meeting their contractual requirements in accordance with a Subcontracting Plan or a Small Business Participation Plan can encounter negative consequences including less than acceptable Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System ratings, Liquidated Damages for Subcontracting, and not having an option exercised due to lack of commitment to small business.

Q: Is the DES Draft RFP still expected to be released this month?

A: Yes.

Q: Can a subcontractor see the requirement within these portals for SETI and ENCORE III? Or only the Prime can see each requirements to pass to the team?

A: No, subcontractors cannot see requirements on the SETI or ENCORE III portal. Prime contractors are responsible for passing potential requirements to their subcontractors.

Q: For IT, why is there still LPTA Solicitation based on Congressional Guidance and the six areas.

A: Mr. Packard discussed this during the briefing and provided an explanation as to why DISA continues to utilize LPTA when it is appropriate.

Q: Do you typically pair Price Realism with LPTA contract evaluation type?

A: As each requirement is unique, Contracting Officers carefully consider which evaluation approach, including how cost/price will be evaluated, is most appropriate for their acquisition on a case by case basis. If the Government intends to conduct a price realism evaluation, the Solicitation will clearly notify offerors of the chosen evaluation methodology.

Q: These LPTA requirements do not appear consistent with DoD guidance to avoid LPTA with technical requirements.

A: DISA requirements comply with the DoD guidance when LPTA is used as a selection methodology. As required by the DFARS, if the LPTA methodology is used, contracting officers are required to document the contract file describing the circumstances justifying the use of the LPTA selection process.

Q: What is cyber supply chain risk management guidelines for Small Business supplier-supply change risk management (SCRM)?

A: DISA contracts generally require SCRM plans in accordance with Federal Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM) policies and regulations including the DFARS 252.239-7017, Notice of Supply Chain Risk; 252.239-7018, Supply Chain Risk; DoD Instruction 5200.44, Protection of Mission Critical Functions to Achieve Trusted Systems and Networks; Section 806 of the FY2011 National Defense Authorization Act Requirements for Information Relating to Supply Chain Risk; and DISA Instruction 240-110-44, Supply Chain Risk Management.

Q: If there are specific requirements in the July forecast that don't have a designated contract vehicle, how can a small business with those capabilities engage the DISA on that specific requirement?

A: Watch beta.sam.gov for Sources Sought Notices and respond to them. Reach out to the Program Manager or the Contracting Officer for information. Reach out to our Corporate Connections office for assistance in identifying the specific requirements owners for the products and services you are wanting to sell to DISA. Their information can be found on our website: <https://www.disa.mil/About/Industry-Partners> and select the last bullet, "Request a Meeting/Submit a Question."

Q: Can you go into more detail about the on/off ramp process? schedule/criteria etc.

A: The on/off ramp processes were included in the solicitations and the resultant contracts. As stated in the second session, the on-ramp will be a full solicitation that mirrors the original solicitations for each contract. The likely time frame is around the time of the recertification requirement prior to the option exercise in year five. On and off ramp details can be viewed in the ENCORE III contract, Section H, H1 On and Off Ramping and the SETI contract, Section H, H2 On/Off Ramping. Sample copies of the contracts can be found on their individual websites at <https://www.ditco.disa.mil/>; click on the contract under "Premier Contracts."

Q: If I wanted to get my products and services in front of the engineers who make product selection decisions what is the best way to do that? For example, how do I sign up for an exchange meeting?

A: Technical Exchange Meeting requests can be made here: <https://dreamport.tech/technical-exchange-meetings.php>

Q: Why does FMA or DISA use Zoom with its close connection with China and servers housed in China? Please advise.

A: For this webinar, we participated by using our personal devices, government issued devices were not used. For security reasons, DISA requires users to only use DoD-approved platforms when conducting official business.

Q: What would you suggest a young company do to gain a contract with DISA? Should we look to partner with a company as a sub?

A: The answer totally depends on the individual company and their capabilities to prime a contract. The only way to get a prime contract without any sole source authorities is to submit a winning proposal. However, generally, subcontracting is a good way to start.

Q: Will an event like this occur again?

A: Yes. DISA's Office of Small Business Programs provides this forum, Leadership In Action, on a regular basis. Please let them know which DISA leaders you would like to hear from by sending an email to: disa.meade.osbp.mbx.disa-small-business-office@mail.mil

Q: How do I obtain more information regarding the Contingence Corridor program?

A: Visit the FedMall website at www.fedmall.mil and view the step-by-step process provided on the Quick Start Guide: Contractor Contingency Store. For more assistance, contact the Defense Logistics Agency Enterprise Service Desk at 1-855-352-0001.

Q: In the past DISA has had a few projects in the past I liked, but it's the lack of Facility Clearance that has stopped me in the past. How receptive would DISA be in getting new and emerging companies and non-traditional contracting companies into their sphere with as many layers at their agency that maybe lacking the security clearance?

A: For the SETI contract, DISA did allow for small businesses to propose and win contracts without the clearance as we were looking for innovative and non-traditional companies. With the award of those 25 small business contracts, DISA is unlikely to solicit for requirements without the clearances in hand. For the ENCORE III contract, DISA also allowed businesses to propose and win contracts within the clearance to allow ample competition and reduce the clearance as a potential limiting factor. Typically, for individual requirements, requiring offices do not have ample lead-time to allow for contract/task order award without a contractor holding a current clearance.

Small Businesses without clearances can seek out teaming arrangements with companies who currently have the desired clearance level and seek to partner with those companies on an existing contract/order and then the company can sponsor the SB for the required clearance level.

Q: Please describe DISA's approach to achieving the DoD Zero Trust policy objectives? How can Private Industry partner to achieve the objectives? How is DISA limiting unneeded lateral mobility through their network in order to reduce the risk of data exposure/breach?

A: This question is outside of this session and the knowledge base of the speakers. Would recommend watching for other events where DISA technical folks discuss Zero Trust.

Q: Will the attendee list be released to everyone in attendance?

A: No, as FMA did not ask participants for permission to release. We will plan for this in the future.

Q: Will slides be shared after the webinar?

A: Yes. The slides were posted on www.ftmeadealliance.org.

Q: Has DISA utilized or consider utilizing the National Institutes of Health Technology Acquisition and Assessment Center suite of GWACs?

A: Yes. We use the CIO-SP3 GWACs.

Q: I represent a manufacturer with product listings on the US DODIN Approved Product list. Does this presentation include information for manufacturers?

A: We only received one question about products, so no; this session is not geared towards manufacturers.

Q: Where are DISA opportunities listed? Beta.sam.gov? Govwin?

A: Opportunities are posted on the Procurement Forecast. It can be found at disa.mil, click the toolbar labeled News and Events, click Events. Under Forecast to Industry click 2020 Forecast to Industry, the forecast is located on the right hand side labeled Forecast of Procurement Actions. We use beta.sam for Request For Informations, Sources Sought Notices, and to post open market solicitations. DISA has no connection to GovWin.

Q: Now that we are dealing with COVID, how would we be able to schedule a meeting with the DISA Small Business Office?

A: Send an –mail to the DISA OSBP to schedule a meeting: disa.meade.osbp.mbx.disa-small-business-office@mail.mil

Q: Will DISA be providing an updated advanced forecast of opportunities to industry? How often published and where published?

Our forecast is always on disa.mil. We update it twice a year, mostly recently in July. The current forecast is located: <https://www.disa.mil/NewsandEvents/Events/Forecast-to-Industry-2020>. Generally, DISA posts the Forecast in November commensurate with the annual DISA-sponsored Forecast to Industry and in April commensurate with the annual AFCEA TechNet Symposium. This year’s April posting was delayed when the AFCEA TechNet symposium was postponed.

Q: How is DISA conducting “DISA 101” via COVID?

A: DISA is conducting these sessions monthly on-line. Send an email to disa.meade.osbp.mbx.disa-small-business-office@mail.mil to request an invite.

Q: I am a woman owned small business. Does DISA recognize Minority Business Enterprise certification?

A: No. As a federal agency, we can only recognize the federally designated categories, which include WOSB and Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Small Business.

Q: Is beta.sam.gov the best way to find HUBZone contracts from DISA? Or is there a different way?

A: Beta.sam is a good resource for our Sources Sought Notices of upcoming requirements. Responding to those demonstrates industry interest. This market research leads to the set-asides.

Q: What was that URL that Ms. Daniels gave out?

A: beta.certify.sba.gov.

Q: For the Technical Exchange Meetings (TEMs), are they classified?

A: No.

Q: Do we (SB) have to have facility clearance – Facility Site Clearance before doing any business with DISA? If we do not have FCL, what is the best way to bid on any opportunities that requires FCL

A: Most of our opportunities require an FCL. The requirement will be stated in the solicitation and Performance Work Statement/Statement of Work. If you do not have an FCL, the best way to obtain work is through subcontracting and getting the prime to sponsor an FCL.

Q: Thank you for the forecast update. However, the Forecast still has opportunities that has release date (in the past) of Fiscal Year 2019 and 2020 first quarter. Being a SB, we don't have resources to understand if that is still an active opportunity or not.

A: If there is an opportunity that is listed with a release date in the past, it may be behind schedule. You can email the contracting POC listed for a status update. Additionally, you can email OSBP at disa.meade.osbp.mbx.disa-small-business-office@mail.mil for assistance in determining if the acquisition is upcoming or has been awarded.

Q: Can you please indicate where the DISA procurement forecast is located again?

A: <https://www.disa.mil/NewsandEvents/Events/Forecast-to-Industry-2020>.

Q: IT Schedule 70?

A: DISA uses the GSA Federal Supply Schedule IT-70 on a regular basis.

Q: Can you also consider National Institutes of Health CIO SP3 as this is another GWAC with qualified vendor base?

A: Yes. DISA uses CIO-SP3 on a regular basis.

Q: Can we get recording of training emailed to us?

A: Please visit www.ftmeadealliance.org on their webinar page for the recording.

Q: Will SETI implement, on the DITCO web portal, a Requirements Tracker similar to ENCORE III's portal to provide early notice of requirements approved for release on the SETI vehicle?

A: Yes. The capability is in use on the DITCO Requirements Tracking website by selecting the desired contract vehicle from the dropdown. https://www.ditco.disa.mil/discms/requirements_tracking.asp