



MARKET RESEARCH GUIDE

JUNE 2010

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Introduction

DSCA Market Research Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide contracting and technical personnel with a basic guide for conducting market research. The document is organized in a manner which should allow readers a quick reference guide on various day to day market research issues related to conducting market research, locating sources and types of information, contract file documentation, commercial or non-developmental items, and tailored solicitation/contract terms and conditions.

Market Research is a tool used to determine what is available in the market to meet a specific need in order to meet your organizational goals and objectives and determine the terms and conditions customarily used in the commercial market for the item or service being procured.

The market research concept is not new. Most agency requiring activities and procurement personnel have been performing this necessary step all along. What is new is that we must document our market research, review our requirements to ensure that when appropriate, we buy an item that is commercially available or that does not require a new development effort, and tailor the solicitation/contract terms and conditions consistent with customary commercial practices.

Most of the confusion in today's environment is related to who does the market research and what level of documentation is adequate. The answer is – it depends! There is no standard answer, the level of research and documentation will vary depending on the complexity and dollar value of the requirement and the nature of the item or service being contemplated.

Market Surveillance

When conducted as a continuing, ongoing activity, and not isolated to specific acquisitions, market surveillance is an effective tool to assist agency management in its strategic planning. This type of market research provides an agency and requiring activities with current knowledge of changes, advances and trends in technology, and products of interest. It provides a valuable marketplace/commodity database to support determinations regarding industry capability, product availability, competitive market forces, and use of alternative sources.

Market surveillance is most appropriately conducted by requiring activities and at higher levels of management due to strategic planning implications that may be realized through expected and potential product and market advances. Requiring activities will also be served by performing an on-going market surveillance effort and maintaining a database for use on specific requirements.

Various methods may be employed to perform market surveillance. The key to performing on-going market surveillance is to ensure that industry representatives have access to individuals or organizations that are conducting the on-going surveillance. Industry conferences or trade shows also enable management and using activities to become familiar with market trends, product or service advances, delivery capability, product or service pricing, and new companies to the industry. The on-going market research data should be shared within an organization and outside to other interested branches, divisions or organizations within an agency. Market surveillance data should be considered and utilized in both short and long term acquisition planning.

When conducting market surveillance one should seek to answer the following questions:

What is my organizations' short term or current/recurring needs (current fiscal year)? As an example, one might think in terms of office supplies, replacement lab equipment, updated computer software and hardware.

What are the organization's long term strategic needs (advances needed to further organizations goals)? Examples of these types of requirements might be an expendable launch vehicle for a satellite, an integrated software program to manage the organization's financial matters, new lab facilities (building and equipment).

What are the industry's current products and service capability? What have they produced or are they producing or providing right now.

What new development programs are they working on? R&D activities and specific developmental work being conducted for outside organizations.

What trends are noticed within the industry? Retention of highly qualified technical personnel for research activities, industry moving toward autonomous facilities for manufacturing, swift introduction of latest technology in the industry, increasing competition from foreign firms, or increases or decreases in product or service quality.

Who are the industry leaders in terms of performance, quality, price, delivery capability, capacity, depth of products or services, etc.?

What are the industry's levels of quality and ability to maintain quality products and services?

The previous questions are not meant to be all inclusive but rather as examples. Each organization needs to determine what their own goals and objectives are and how to best capture industry capabilities and progress to meet that organization's desired set of information needs. It is essential that an organization performing an on-going market surveillance activity develop a data base to capture all activities within the organization, as well as maintaining ties and possibly sharing information with other organizations within an agency and across agencies or departments to ensure maximum efficiency and needless duplication of effort.

FAR 10.001

FAR Part 10.001(2)(v) states, "Agencies shall conduct market research on an ongoing basis, and take advantage to the maximum extent practicable of commercially available market research methods, to identify effectively the capabilities, including the capabilities of small businesses and new entrants into Federal contracting, that are available in the marketplace for meeting the requirements of the agency in furtherance of a contingency operation or defense against or recovery from nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological attack; and.....".

When conducted as part of an agency's continuing market surveillance, market research can help the agency to more realistically forecast the relative merits of developing or acquiring products and systems based upon current assessments of existing systems and technologies, production processes and capacities, and distribution and support capabilities.

Statement of Need (SON)

An acquisition begins with a description of an agency's need stated in terms sufficient for conducting market research. Typically, it is a narrative description of items or services the agency requires, expressed as general statements of the items/service intended use in terms of function to be performed, performance requirement, essential physical characteristics, and, if necessary, the environments in which they will operate. Integrated logistics support requirements may be included in SON's for other than consumable items.

Some requirements are critical and essential; others may be desirable and are capable of being expressed as targets or objectives. Differences between these two categories should be made clear in the SON. Identifying essential requirements does not require the agency to describe its needs in terms of the lowest level of technical capabilities or features that will meet those needs. Indeed, the agency has substantial latitude to describe its needs in a manner that reflects an optimum acquisition strategy (e.g., considering which items/service represents the best value in terms of quality, expected life of the item, qualification of personnel for services, or vendor past performance, etc.).

An agency's SON should be written in a manner that promotes full and open competition (or maximum practicable competition under the Simplified Acquisition Threshold). Restrictive provisions can be included only when authorized by law or when the agency can justify their necessity. Specific products or features cannot be required in SON's unless research has clearly established that no other products or features can meet agency needs (the same holds for minimum qualifications of personnel for services). That finding must be supported by required justifications and approvals. (Refer to FAR 11.002 for further information and requirements for development of a SON).

The Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (FASA) revised the commercial item definition, expanding the coverage to "items of a type which are customarily used for non-government purposes..., including minor modifications..., or customarily available modifications available in the commercial market place..." to that item in order to meet the government requirement (see appendix A, Definitions).

Effective research will help to determine, initially, the availability of commercial items and will produce the following types of information that will aid in developing the final requirements documents:

- Capability of an offered product (or personnel for services) to meet all elements of the agency's description of needs.
- As an alternative, the product's (or personnel for services) capability to compensate for failing to meet all stated needs by offering other advantageous features or performance.
- As another alternative, the feasibility and potential cost of modifying the offered product to meet the agency's needs.
- Information regarding the offered product's design stability, prospects for future design enhancements, and their impact on the product to be delivered during the term of any resulting contract.

- Production processes, facilities, depth of personnel and their experience, and capabilities.
- Distribution and logistics support capabilities, and access to qualified personnel.

Industry Feedback

Following the development of the SON, an agency must conduct market research to help define the agency's requirements by determining whether sources of commercial items or services are available to satisfy them. Commercial or non-developmental may satisfy those requirements either "as is" or through modification. This step may help to determine whether the agency's requirements could be appropriately modified to allow the use of commercial items/services. It also helps determine whether commercial items/services could be incorporated in the deliverable item as components or tasks.

The SON will allow potential sellers to compare their commercial and/or non-developmental products to the Government need and provide useful feedback to those conducting the market research. This initial industry contact is most appropriately conducted by the requiring activity, and if appropriate, with participation of the buying office as necessary.

Procurement/contracting personnel will not normally have a major role in the preparation of SON's; however, contracting personnel should participate as a team member in the initial industry contact and as a part of the team developing the final requirements document for the acquisition. Consequently, they should be able to understand the SON and recognize that it is written clearly and in general terms. A SON written in general terms increases the possibility that the commercial marketplace can satisfy the agency's needs.

There are various methods that can be used to disseminate the SON and solicit feedback from industry. The information and request can be posted to an industry accessible webpage (i.e., DSCA /GCMC business opportunities internet pages), a request for information (RFI) or sources sought synopsis can be issued through the FedBizOpps, an industry conference can be held, and particular sources that are known to be capable can be contacted.

There are no clearly defined steps or processes for soliciting industry feedback, but a reasonable effort should be put forth and the final result should be the ability to identify one or more of the following: 1) an item of a type which is customarily used for non-governmental purposes or non-developmental item/service exists that will meet the need, 2) revising or altering the need so that a commercial item or non-developmental item/service can meet it, 3) with customary modification or alteration a commercial or non-developmental item exist to meet the need 4) with minor, non-customary modification or alteration a commercial item can meet the need, 5) components that are commercial or non-developmental items/services can be utilized in the final product to meet the need, 6) no commercial or non-developmental items/services exists to meet the need, and 7) finalization of the requirement document (PWS, SOW, Work Statement, Specification, etc.).

Further contact with industry after requirements have been finalized and prior to issuance of the final solicitation can obtain the following additional information to benefit the agency:

- Standard commercial practices for customizing, modifying, or tailoring products to meet customer needs and their associated costs.
- Customary terms and conditions governing commercial sales of the product, including warranties, buyer financing, and discounts.

- Copies of standard, commercial agreements that have been used in commercial sales of the product.
- The applicability of any industry-wide laws or regulations to purchases of the product.
- The number of manufacturers of the product, as well as the status, size, and location of each.
- Extent of competition and the nature of competitive forces in the market place.
- Relevant packaging, handling, storage, and transportation practices.
- Customer references to enable the agency to evaluate others' experiences with the product and their observations regarding its quality, reliability and maintainability.
- Market prices and pricing trends.
- Purchasing histories of other agencies or organizations for the same or similar items, including pricing and contract performance data.

FASA targeted the business conduct of federal agencies and not only the need to buy commercial items, but buying them in a commercial manner. In order to procure items or services which are of a type customarily used for non-governmental purposes and maximize the associated savings, buying activities must consider tailoring the solicitation/contract terms and conditions in a manner which is consistent with commercial practices. By procuring supplies and services in this manner, the Government avoids the added costs of unique government contractual requirements and the associated administrative and development cost when existing items either "as is" or modified will meet the agency need. In order to ensure that tailoring of terms and conditions was consistent with customary commercial practices, Part 12 of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) precludes the tailoring of the terms and conditions in a manner which is inconsistent with customary commercial practices, unless a waiver is granted.

Documenting Results

Appendix D is provided as an example of a standard format which can be utilized to document the results of the market research activity. The form is provided as sample only and should not be construed as the best or only way to document market research results. The remainder of this section provides FAR guidance language with specific citation, as well as, suggested approaches to documenting the various stages which may be employed during the market investigation process.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS *(See FAR 2.101 for the most current definitions of the following key terms.)*

“Commercial component” means any component that is a commercial item.

“Commercial item” means—

(a) Any item, other than real property, that is a type customarily used for nongovernmental purposes and that--

(1) Has been sold, leased, or licensed to the general public; or

(2) Has been offered for sale, lease, or license to the general public;

(b) Any items that evolved from an item described in paragraph(a) of this definition through advances in technology or performance and that is not yet available in the commercial marketplace, but will be available in the commercial marketplace in time to satisfy the delivery requirements under a Government solicitation;

(c) Any item that would satisfy a criterion expressed in paragraphs (a) or (b) of this definition, but for—

(1) Modifications of a type customarily available in the commercial marketplace; or

(2) Minor modifications of a type not customarily available in the commercial marketplace made to meet Federal Government requirements. A minor modification means modifications that do not significantly alter the nongovernmental function or essential physical characteristics of an item or component, or change the purpose of a process. Factors to be considered in determining whether a modification is minor include the value and size of the modification and the comparative value and size of the final product. Dollar values and percentages may be used as guideposts, but are not conclusive evidence that a modification is minor;

(d) Any combination of items meeting the requirements of paragraphs (a),(b),(c), or (e) of this definition that are of a type customarily combined and sold in combination to the general public;

(e) Installation services, maintenance services, repair services, training services, and other services if such services are procured for support of an item referred to in paragraphs (a), (b),(c), or (d) of this definition, and if the source of such services--

(1) Offers such services to the general public and the Federal Government contemporaneously and under similar terms and conditions; and

(2) Offers to use the same work force for providing the Federal Government with such service as the source uses for providing such services to the general public;

(f) Services of a type offered and sold competitively in substantial quantities in the commercial marketplace based on established catalog or market prices for specific tasks performed under

standard commercial terms and conditions. This does not include services that are sold based on hourly rates without an established catalog or market price for a specific service performed;

(g) Any item, combination of items, or service referred to in paragraphs (a) through (f), notwithstanding the fact that the item, combination of items, or service is transferred between or among separate divisions, subsidiaries, or affiliates of a contractor; or

(h) A non-developmental item, if the procuring agency determines the item was developed exclusively at private expense and sold in substantial quantities, on competitive bases, to multiple State and local governments.

“Component” means any item supplied to the Federal Government as part of an end item or of another component.

“Non-developmental item” means—

(a) Any previously developed item of supply used exclusively for governmental purposes by a Federal agency, a State or Local government, or a foreign government with which the United States has a mutual defense cooperation agreement;

(b) Any item described in paragraph (a) of this definition that requires only minor modification or modifications of a type customarily available in the commercial marketplace in order to meet the requirement of the procuring department or agency; or

(c) Any item of supply being produced that does not meet the requirements of paragraphs (a) or (b) solely because the item is not yet in use.

“Simplified acquisition threshold” means \$100,000, except that in the case of any contract to be awarded and performed, or purchase to be made, outside the United States in support of a contingency operation (as defined in 10 U.S.C.101(a)(13)) or a humanitarian or peacekeeping operation (as defined in 10 U.S.C.2302(7) and 41 U.S.C.259(d)), the term means \$250,000.

APPENDIX B

COLLECTING MARKET DATA

Catalogs, Periodicals, and Other Sources

1. Listed below are some readily available, easily accessed sources that provide product and industry data.
 - a. Thomas Register – An alphabetical listing of companies' addresses and phone numbers; product listing; description of products; and manufacturers of products.
 - b. Vendors files – Identify suppliers; distributors; subcontractors; representatives of products; brochures; and past and present Government contracts.
 - c. Mandatory and optional schedules – List products and services; suppliers; prices; contract period; and ordering information.
 - d. Basic Ordering Agreements (BOAs) – Identify the name of contractor with whom the agreement is made; description of supplies or services; methods for pricing and delivery; contracting offices authorized to issue orders; and future orders allowable under the agreement.
 - e. Trade journals –Address products; price information (i.e., trends in the immediate area, price escalations, etc.); Government needs vs. commercial needs.
 - f. Consumer Price Index – Published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPI provides a guide to changes to "retail" prices. It is used as a price adjustment factor in some areas of procurement (leasing in particular) and as a general gauge of inflation. However, the Producer Price Index is usually a better source of data on price trends for the Government, since the Government is usually a "wholesale" buyer.
 - g. Producer Price Index – Published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). It tracks changes in the prices which producers receive from the initial commercial purchasers of their products. It reflects the selling prices of selected manufacturers or the prices quoted on organized exchanges such as the Chicago Board of Trade. The prices are generally f.o.b. origin for immediate delivery.
 - h. Specialized Publications – These publications offer current market information regarding products and their suppliers. Publications like Federal Computer Week and Communications Week may be of special interest.
2. Other sources of information include:
 - a. Yellow Pages
 - b. Consumer Reports on-line
 - c. Procurement directories
 - d. Commodity indices

- e. Product brochures and promotional literature
 - f. Catalogs published by manufacturers, distributors, and dealers
3. The following information sources and search techniques may be beneficial, along with Internet sources listed in the following section.
- a. Pre-solicitation notices in the Federal Business Opportunities (FEDBIZOPPS).
 - b. Review of acquisition history and exchange of acquisition information, including source lists.
 - c. Solicitation mailing lists, qualified products lists, and qualified bidder's lists.
 - d. Review of the results of recent market research undertaken to meet similar or identical requirements.
 - e. Contacting experts regarding specific market capabilities.
4. Effective market research enables you to shape a procurement package to fit market conditions and encourage responses from the sources most capable of meeting the requirement.

APPENDIX C

WEB BASED MARKET RESEARCH

General Sources of Information

The Internet sites listed below are intended to be an aide to the program management team in conducting market research and are not intended to be all inclusive.

1. AKSS Ask A Professor on Market Research.

URL: <https://acquire.dau.mil/akss/>

Use this site to find answers to market research questions. Type in “Market Research”, and then select “Ask a Professor”. If your question/subject does not appear, fill out the “Ask a Professor-Submit your Own Question” form found by selecting the “Ask a Question” button accessible at the bottom of the page at <https://akss.dau.mil/askaprof-akss/default.aspx>.

2. Central Contractor Registration (CCR).

URL: <http://www.ccr.gov>

CCR is a searchable database of companies doing business with the Government. The database is searchable by the contractor name, Data Universal Numbering System Code, Commercial and Government Entity Code, and the North American Industry Classification System Code.

3. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

URL: <http://www.bls.gov/cpi>

BLS is the principle fact-finding agency for the Federal Government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics. The BLS is an independent national statistical agency that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates essential statistical data to the American public, the U.S. Congress, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, businesses, and labor entities. Indexes can be tapped for market research purposes (e.g., escalation rates).

4. Commercial Item Handbook. (Version 1.0), November 2001, USD, (AT&L).

URL: <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/Docs/cihandbooks.pdf>

A comprehensive guide that includes additional sources for conducting market research, making a commercial item determination, and writing commercial item contracts.

DoD is in the process of updating the Commercial Item Handbook. A draft of Version 2.0 can be found at:

URL: http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/cpic/cp/docs/draftcihandbook_06172009.doc

5. Contract Pricing Reference Guide: Chapter 1.0 to 1.3, "Pre-solicitation Market Research".

URL: http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/cpf/contract_pricing_reference_guides.html

6. Defense Acquisition University (DAU).

URL: www.dau.mil

DAU provides training, career management and services to enable the Acquisition Technology and Logistics (AT&L) community to make smart business decisions and delivery timely and affordable solutions to the war fighter. The DAU Web site provides a variety of resources toward this goal.

7. NASA's Contract Consolidation Initiative page.

URL: <http://procurement.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/cci/first.cgi>

Consolidated Contracting Initiative (CCI) initiative emphasizes developing, using, and sharing contract resources to meet Agency objectives. The goals of this initiative are to meet users' needs faster; reduce user time spent on acquisition-related tasks; shorten acquisition lead times; minimize contract duplication; save resources; reduce closeout backlogs; and improve cooperation with other government agencies. NASA plans to consolidate requirements wherever it makes sense to do so. CCI information is available on-line at <http://prod.nais.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/cci/first.cgi>. CCI began November 4, 1996.

8. Eagle Eye database.

URL: <http://www.eagleeyeinc.com/Search.FPC?Pg=2253>

Lists annual contract awards, which can be used to identify contractors currently delivering the same or similar items to either the requesting agency or other agencies. Eagle Eye also identifies cognizant purchasing activities enabling further direct contact for information.

9. GSA's "Advantage" service.

URL: <http://www.gsaadvantage.gov/>

Since 1949, it has been GSA's mission to help agencies better serve the public by meeting - at best value - their needs for products and services, and to simplify access to information. For over 12 years, *GSA Advantage* has been a reliable and proven one-stop online resource for thousands of Federal employees worldwide. GSA Advantage offers the most comprehensive selection of approved products and services from GSA contracts.

10. FedBizOpps.

URL: <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/>

The official free online listing of Government contracting opportunities which has replaced the Commerce Business Daily.

12. DoD Electronic Mall (EMALL).

URL: <https://emall6.prod.dodonline.net/main/>

The DoD EMALL, managed and operated by the Joint Electronic Commerce Program Office (JECPO), allows Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card (GCPC) customers to place delivery orders against established contract vehicles to acquire off-the-shelf, finished items from the commercial marketplace. The DoD EMALL offers cross catalog shopping for the purpose of comparison pricing and best value decision-making.

13. General Services Administration.

URL: <http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/home.do?tabId=0>

GSA serves as the acquisition and procurement arm of the federal government, offering equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and integrated information technology solutions to federal agencies so that the agencies can focus on doing what they do best—serving the public.

14. Dow Jones Business Information Services.

URL: <http://www.dowjones.com>

Publishes business and financial news and information.

15. STAT-USA/Internet.

Url: <http://www.stat-usa.gov>

A service of the U.S. Department of Commerce that includes the National Trade Data Bank, the U.S. Government's most comprehensive source of international trade data and export promotion information; the Economic Bulletin Board, a comprehensive source for government-sponsored economic releases and business leads; and Global Business Procurement Opportunities, an international procurement marketplace for businesses that provides billions of dollars in procurement opportunities from all over the world.

16. Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH).

URL: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

For hundreds of different types of jobs—such as teacher, lawyer, and nurse—the Occupational Outlook Handbook tells you: the training and education needed; earnings; expected job

prospects; what workers do on the job; and working conditions. In addition, the Handbook gives you job search tips, links to information about the job market in each State, and more.

General Product Information Sources

17. ThomasNet.

URL: <http://www.thomasregional.com>

Search ThomasNet to find manufacturers, distributors and service providers - from Actuators to Zirconium and everything in between.

18. Institute for Supply Management.

URL: www.ism.ws

Founded in 1915, the Institute for Supply Management™ (ISM) claims to be the largest supply management association in the world as well as one of the most respected. ISM's mission is to lead the [supply management profession](#) through its standards of excellence, research, promotional activities, and education. ISM's membership base includes more than 40,000 supply management professionals with a network of domestic and international affiliated associations. ISM is a not-for-profit association that provides opportunities for the promotion of the profession and the expansion of professional skills and knowledge.

19. IHS.

URL: <http://parts.ihs.com/>

IHS claims to be the leading developer of world-class component databases, applications to manage component obsolescence, and custom data services tailored to your component research and sourcing needs.

20. CommerceNet.

URL: <http://www.commerce.net>

CommerceNet is a unique business forum that fosters worldwide collaboration and advances the rapid and real-time exchange of business information over the Internet. CommerceNet is a not-for-profit corporation that is conducting a large-scale market trial of technologies and business processes to support electronic commerce via the Internet.

21. BizWeb.

URL: <http://www.bizweb.com>

Biz Web's motto is "We scour the Internet for company and product information so you won't have to." Thousands of companies are categorized and listed by the goods or services they provide.

22. The Manufacturer's Information Network.

URL: <http://mfginfo.com>

A source of information for industry and those services related to manufacturing.

General Business Information.

23. Access Business Online(tm).

URL: <http://www.clickit.com>

Comprehensive business service that uses a proprietary system called Touch & ReachOut(tm) to make access to a wealth of top quality business information. It provides comprehensive and timely information, communication and transactions across 20 major market areas. It promises to ultimately offer the user the ability to navigate to 40,000 locations within three clicks of the mouse.

24. U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission Corporate Information Database.

URL: <http://www.sec.gov/edaux/searches.htm>

This data base contains financial filings required of companies as required by the SEC.

25. Big Yellow

URL: <http://www.bigyellow.com>

Yellow Page listings of over 16.5 million businesses in the United States. A service of NYNEX Information Technologies Company. Also contains helpful links to other business information.

26. Council on Competitiveness.

URL: www.compete.org

A nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization in Washington, the Council shapes the debate on competitiveness by bringing together business, labor, academic and government leaders to evaluate economic challenges and opportunities. Conferences, seminars and special events are used to disseminate the Council's findings and recommendations to experts, policy makers, government officials, media and the general public. The appendices to the Council on Competitiveness Report on U.S. Research & Development Competitiveness, entitled Endless Frontier, Limited Resources U.S. R&D Policy for Competitiveness, contain studies of research & development practices in the Aircraft, Automotive, Chemical, Electronics, Information Technologies and the Pharmaceuticals industries.

Aircraft

27. The Internet Parts Locator System.

URL: <http://www.ipls.com>

Provides the commercial aviation industry worldwide aircraft spare parts availability and online repair capabilities. IPLS enables you to search the database, request a quote from one of the listing companies, post messages to the aviation specific news groups, and be part of on-line discussion groups.

Apparel, Fiber & Textiles

28. The Garment Industry Development Corporation.

URL: <http://www.gidc.org>

Provides access to New York's vast apparel production capability through its Domestic Sourcing Database. It provides fast and easy access to New York manufacturers and contractors including supplier's capabilities, capacity, machine types and quality control techniques.

29. National Sourcing Database (NSDB).now called the Sourcing Mall.

URL: <http://www.sourcingmall.com/>

Integrates several data sources with information on companies producing apparel items, textile and fabric products, machinery and equipment, findings, and other useful services within the soft goods industry.

30. Architect, Engineering & Construction Product Information.

sweets.construction.com

Search for building/construction products.

Chemicals

31. ChemConnect.

URL: <http://www.chemconnect.com>

A worldwide Chemical Suppliers Directory and Chemicals Exchange. The ChemConnect Search Engine allows the user to query the ChemConnect chemical products database.

Computers and Electronics

32. Price Watch

URL: <http://www.pricewatch.com>

A fast way to find the "street price" on a computer product. Price Watch Corporation is an independent research firm that studies the street prices of computer components. Their web database is updated about 3 times a day at undetermined times.

33. TechnoGate.

URL: <http://www.technogate.com>

An on-line technology information database and communication network developed by the Canadian Advanced Technology Association (CATA). Techno Gate provides fast information exchange for the world-wide technology industry.

34. Electronic Industries Alliance.

URL: <http://www.eia.org>

The Electronic Industries Alliance (EIA) is a national trade organization that includes a broad spectrum of U.S. manufacturers. The Alliance is a partnership of electronic and high-tech associations and companies whose mission is promoting the market development and competitiveness of the U.S. high-tech industry through domestic and international policy efforts. EIA represents over 12,500 U.S. electronics manufacturers. Information concerning many of these firms can be accessed through the EIA homepage.

35. Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions.

URL: <https://chess.army.mil/ascp/commerce/staticPages/sitemap404.jsp>

The Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHESS) is aligned under the [Program Executive Officer, Enterprise Information Systems](#) (PEO EIS) and our mission remains as always - to support all Army customers' commercial IT requirements - quickly and economically. CHESS works diligently with other Army Knowledge Management (AKM) partners including the Army CIO-G6, the Installation Management Agency (IMA) and NETCOM to provide architecturally sound, standards and policy compliant IT enterprise solutions to all Army posts, camps and stations around the world.

36. Information Technology Electronic Commerce Direct.

URL: <http://www.itec-direct.navy.mil>

The Information Technology Electronic Commerce (ITEC) Direct program provides commercially available, Department of Navy standard compliant, Information Technology (IT)

products and services. This site provides a fast and easy way to electronically locate and compare IT hardware, software, and services.

International Sources

37. The Thomas Register of European Manufacturers.

URL: <http://www.tipcoeuropa.com>

A pan-European industrial buying guide that provides immediate access to 130,000 industrial suppliers throughout 12 European Union countries.

Office Equipment

38. Better Buys for Business.

URL: <http://www.betterbuys.com>

Offers a guide to various kinds of office equipment. It refuses to accept advertising, so as to offer an unbiased analysis. There are Better Buys reports on all the major types of office equipment -- copiers, fax, multifunctional equipment, printers, phones systems, mailing equipment, and more. You can either subscribe to all the guides or buy individual ones.

Subscriptions Required

39. Hoover's a D&B Company.

URL: <http://hoovers.com>

This database contains listings for over 32M companies and 37M people and reports for over 600 industries. Hoover's Company Profile Database is only available to subscribers.

40. Dunn & Bradstreet's.

URL: <http://www.dnb.com>

A catalog of tools to identify and assist in evaluating potential suppliers based on purchasing needs; demographics such as size, geography, woman or minority owned business; ISO 9000 registration; past performance information; non-delivery or insolvency information. D&B offers reports, publications, supplier base analysis and software.

APPENDIX D

Many years ago, the principle purpose of conducting market research was to identify commercial items that could meet the Government's needs. For decades, the Government had written specifications and statements of work that did not reflect commercial practice. Instead, we generated unique Government documents that were unnecessarily expensive and restricted competition. As a result of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994, the pressure was on to investigate the market place and find off-the-shelf solutions to address our requirements.

The emphasis over the last ten years has changed from simply finding commercial products to meet our needs to generating solicitations that mirror, to the maximum extent possible, customary commercial practice from the clauses to the specifications/statements of work. This guide book reflects both areas of concern. For example, Appendix D first asks you to verify that what you are buying is a commercial item within the definition of FAR Part 2.1. Subsequent paragraphs ask you to determine what clauses the commercial sector uses and how non-Government entities typically write the actual requirement.

There is little question that the vast majority of what we buy to support our mission is "commercial." Checking that Commercial Item box is easy. The real quest now is to generate a solicitation that is virtually indistinguishable from a commercial solicitation. Complete transparency will never be actually achieved because we are still obligating and expending appropriated funds. We will always have a Termination for Convenience clause and other mandatory language unique to the Government.

We can, however, encourage competition and facilitate contract management by tailoring existing FAR 52.212-4 clauses and expressing our requirements in ways familiar to the private sector. A market research report should detail to what extent you have met that goal. We not only want you to find out how the requirement itself should be written, but also to identify more commercial friendly clause wording for those clauses that can be tailored.

Your market report should detail:

- Whom you contacted (buyers and sellers).
- The results of each source contacted.
- What market research ideas you decided to actually include and not include in your purchase request.

First, it is important to identify specific market research information from the source(s) that provided it. That is captured in the "Finding" in Section VI of the report. Second, it is equally important to document what parts of your purchase request were influenced by what you learned. That is what we mean by "Impact" in Section VI of the report.

It is not enough to simply identify the market research method and the specific sources contacted. You must establish an audit trail from the market research effort to your actual purchase request. If you learned nothing of value, explain why it was irrelevant. If you gained useful insight, give your market research effort credit where credit is due. Market research is not about checking boxes and listing contacts. Market research is about discovering ways to

improve the procurement process from pre-award, award, and contract management. The market report merely documents the link between the research and the final product.

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT TEMPLATE

Please note that the depth of market research conducted and documented in this report should be commensurate with the nature and complexity of the acquisition.

I. POLICY.

Per FAR 10.001(a)(2), this report is submitted in support of:

- _____ a new requirement;
- _____ an acquisition with an estimated value in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold;
- _____ an acquisition with an estimated value less than the simplified acquisition threshold where adequate information is not available to develop the requirements package and the circumstances justify the cost of performing the market research;
- _____ an acquisition that could lead to a bundled contract (15 U.S.C. 644(e)(2)(A));
- _____ a requirement less than the micro-purchase threshold that is not being purchased using the Government Purchase Card (*Complete paragraph V. 11. only.*);
- _____ a requirement less than \$25,000 that is being purchased and used overseas and is not being purchased using the Government Purchase Card (*Complete paragraph V. 12. only.*); and
- _____ other: _____.

II. BACKGROUND. Please note that the codes identified in fields 2 through 4 below will be used when advertising this requirement. It is important to verify the accuracy of these codes, since advertising under incorrect codes is a violation of the Competition in Contracting Act.

1. Title: _____
(Provide a brief description of the requirement (Statement of Need) to include any relevant procurement history.)

2. Product or Service Code _____
(<http://outreachsystems.com/resources/tables/pscs/> or <http://www.dlis.dla.mil/h2/>)

3. North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) _____
(<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>)

4. Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Code _____
(<http://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sicsearch.html>)

5. Estimated Contract Value (including options): \$ _____

III. MARKET RESEARCH SOURCES.

6. In accordance with FAR Part 10, market research has been conducted for this acquisition. The following techniques were used (*Check all that apply and provide a narrative of the nature of the information obtained and the contact information identified for each reference checked below*):

_____ Applying personal knowledge in procuring supplies/services of this type. (*Provide a narrative describing the nature of your personal knowledge*)

_____ Contacting knowledgeable individuals in Government and industry regarding market capabilities to meet requirements. (*Identify method and date of communication/POC name/title organization/e-mail/phone*)

_____ Reviewing the results of recent market research undertaken to meet similar or identical requirements. (*Cite Contract or Order number/period of performance/names of past contractors/prices paid/other information and date*)

_____ Publishing formal requests for information in appropriate technical or scientific journals or business publications. (*Identify name of journal(s)/publication(s)/date published*)

_____ Querying the Governmentwide database of contracts and other procurement instruments intended for use by multiple agencies available at www.contractdirectory.gov and other Government and commercial databases that provide information relevant to agency acquisitions. (*Identify URL of database(s)/name of procurement instrument(s) identified*)

_____ Participating in interactive, on-line communication among industry, acquisition personnel, and customers. (*Identify POC name/title organization/e-mail/phone/description of the nature of the forum*)

_____ Obtaining source lists of similar items from other contracting activities or agencies, trade associations or other sources. (*Identify POC name/title organization/e-mail/phone and the resultant source list*)

_____ Reviewing catalogs and other generally available product literature published by manufacturers, distributors, and dealers or available on-line. (*Identify catalog and/or product literature*)

_____ Conducting interchange meetings or holding presolicitation conferences to involve potential offerors early in the acquisition process. (*Identify nature of interchange / date / location / list of attendees by name, title, organization, e-mail, and phone*)

_____ Conducting market survey. (*See Script and Questions/Answers*)

_____ Other: _____

IV. COMMERCIAL ITEM DETERMINATION.

7. Based on the results of the above research, it is determined that this requirement:

_____ can be met by commercial items, commercial items with customary or minor modifications, or non-developmental items.

OR

_____ cannot be met by commercial items, commercial items with modifications or non-developmental items. Further, a re-evaluation has been made in accordance with FAR 10.002(b) and this requirement cannot be modified to permit fulfillment by any of the above types of items.

OR

_____ can be met by using a combination of commercial/non-commercial items as specified.

V. MARKET RESEARCH FINDINGS.

The purpose of this section is to describe to what extent your description of work reflects customary commercial practices. Ideally, you will write your requirement in a manner that will parallel how such requirements and solicitations are written in the commercial sector. The concern is that you will impose “Government” wording and/or requirements that will inhibit competition or confuse the market place.

This section should document what you found during market research (Findings) and how that practice or procedure was incorporated into your submission to contracting (Impact). It is important to show the extent that what you found as customary commercial practices are reflected in your requirement. Possible areas of impact are highlighted below, but these items are not intended to limit areas of possible impact in any way. Continue on additional sheets as necessary.

8. Standard industry terms and conditions (e.g. warranty, maintenance, discounts, buyer financing, freight, delivery, acceptance/rejection, etc.) under which commercial sales of the required supplies/services are made:

- METHODS OF CONTRACTING.

Findings.

Impact. *(Extent to which requirement is being competed/Evaluation factors/Contract type/Acquisition lead time)*

- **SPECIFICATIONS / DESCRIPTION OF WORK.**

Findings.

Impact. (*PWS/Product description*)

- **PRICING FACTORS.**

Findings.

Impact. (*CLIN structure/IGE*)

- **BUYER'S METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE.**

Findings.

Impact. (*PWS/QASP*)

- **CONTRACTOR'S QUALITY CONTROL TECHNIQUES.**

Findings.

Impact. (*PWS/QASP*)

- **REMEDIES FOR NONCONFORMING SERVICES.**

Findings.

Impact. (*FAR 52.212-4 Inspection/Acceptance*)

- **TERMINATION.**

Findings.

Impact. (*FAR 52.212-4 Terminations*)

- **PAYMENTS.**

Findings.

Impact. (*FAR 52.212-4 Payments and CLIN structure*)

- **WARRANTIES.**

Findings.

Impact. (*FAR 52.212-4 Warranties*)

- **DISCOUNTS.**

Findings.

Impact. (*FAR 52.212-4 Discounts*)

- **FREIGHT.**

Findings.

Impact. (*IGE*)

- **DELIVERY.**

Findings.

Impact. (*Delivery channels*)

- **BUYER FINANCING.**

Findings.

Impact.

- **OTHER.**

Findings.

Impact.

9. Laws or regulations unique to the required supplies/services:

- **Insert citation.**

Findings.

Impact. (*PWS/Extent to which the requirement is being competed/Acquisition lead time*)

10. The Independent Government Estimate cites the sources and technical assumptions made when developing the following estimates:

- _____ Labor. (*Labor Categories/Level of Effort/Labor Rates*)
- _____ Materials. (*Types/Quantities/Rates*)
- _____ Other Direct Costs.
- _____ Indirect Costs.
- _____ Other Costs.

11. For requirements less than the micro-purchase threshold that are not being purchased using the Government Purchase Card, identify the market research conducted to locate vendors that accept the GPC.

12. For requirements less than \$25,000 that are being purchased and used overseas and are not being purchased using the Government Purchase Card, identify the market research conducted to locate local vendors that accept the GPC.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.

11. Based on the above information, the basic clauses and provisions prescribed in FAR Part 12:

_____ are sufficient for use in this acquisition and do not require any tailoring to be consistent with industry's commercial practices.

OR

_____ requires tailoring to be consistent with industry's commercial practices as noted below. All such tailoring will be included in the solicitation issued for the required supplies/services.

- **Identify affected clause/provision paragraph and your recommended change(s).**

12. Based on the above information, the following sources (minimum of three) appear qualified and interested and are recommended to support this requirement (*For each source, identify the company name / company address / POC / e-mail address /phone number*):

- **Firm 1.**
- **Firm 2.**
- **Firm 3.**

Prepared by:

TYPED NAME
Contracting Officer's Representative/Date

Endorsed by:

TYPED NAME
Contracting Officer/Date

SAMPLE MARKET RESEARCH SCRIPT

Hello, my name is _____ from _____.

I am conducting market research in support of a possible future Government procurement of _____. It is important that we identify potential suppliers and understand how you price your products (services).

I want to emphasize that I am collecting information only. I have no authority to ask for a quote, award a contract, or to even promise that you will receive a quote when and if the Government solicits for this product (service). Only a Government contracting officer can legally solicit a quote and award a contract.

The law does not allow me to provide any specific information regarding the Government requirement. I can only collect information about your company capability and pricing. So it is unlikely that I will be able to answer any of your questions about the specifics of this possible procurement.

Importantly, do not take any further action based upon this inquiry. Do not ship anything or otherwise incur costs you would expect the Government to compensate you for. If you do, your invoice will not be accepted by the Government and you will receive no payment.

Do you have any questions regarding this statement?

My questions are as follows:

SAMPLE MARKET RESEARCH RESULTS TEMPLATE

for

(This represents responses from market research surveys and should be provided to the contracting office with the requirements package. Tailor as necessary.)

Market Research Questionnaire	Men in Trees 10 Sherry Av Kent, OH	Excellent Grounds 341 Calandus St Charles FL	Four Seasons 57 Maine Ave Owings Mills CA	Lee's Contracting 3318 Broad St Plum Point, VA	Landscape Svc 2696-A Waiwai Honolulu HI
1. What is the average performance period?	3 –5 years	1 base yr 4 options	Base yr – 4 options	Base yr 4 options	1 yr with 4 option years
2. What are the total number of Govt contracts that you have at this time? Commercial contracts?	1/0	4/1	4/1	5/3	5/2
3. What is the total dollar value of all current contracts?	\$300,000	\$15,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$2.5 mil	\$2,878,957
4. What is the total amount of acreage on present contracts?	2,000 acres	1,823.10 acres	150 acres	12,000 acres	510 acres
5. What is the largest amount of acreage that you have had for one contract?	1,500 acres Peterson AFB CO	1,085.56	250 acres	10,000 acres	800 acres
6. Are contractor personnel full time, part time, or seasonal?	FT and PT 4,500-6,000	All full time	20 FT	35 FT 20 PT/ seasonal	65 FT – Hawaii
7. What training provisions do you have in place?	Training in winter during slow season	Equipment Safety	Safety Continuous training	Safety Equipment Refresher	Classroom CPR / First Aide Equipment Safety
8. Are contractor quality control requirements in contract?	Yes	Yes. A Quality control person for each contract	Yes	Yes	Yes
9. Are there activity quality assurance requirements?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10. Are there acceptance provisions in contract?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11. Has there been any rejected work because of nonconformance?	None	Yes. Situation was rectified.	No	Yes	No
Market Research Questionnaire	Men in Trees 10 Sherry Av	Excellent Grounds	Four Seasons 57 Maine Ave	Lee's Contracting 3318 Broad St	Landscape Svc 2696-A Waiwai

	Kent, OH	341 Calandus St Charles FL	Owings Mills CA	Plum Point, VA	Honolulu HI
12. Does the contract allow for re-performance of services?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13. What are the basic termination provisions?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. Does contract allow for special events?	Yes	Yes. CLIN for special events	Yes	Yes	Yes
15. Are there provisions for claims and disputes?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
16. Are there provisions for changing terms of the contract?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17. Is there on-site supervision? How many?	Yes 1-5	Yes At least (1)	Yes 3	Yes. 4 supervisors 2 project manager	Yes
18. Are there insurance / bond requirements?	Yes	No	Insurance No bonds	Insurance	Insurance
19. Is the bid schedule per item or price per month?	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both
20. Does the contract specify mowing frequencies?	Specific # cuts Maintain between "inches" high	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
21. Does the contract contain the following: -tree trimming -tree pruning -tree removal -excessive clipping removal -herbicide / pesticide applications -provisions for noise exposure -provisions for birds, ducks, and/or geese	-Tree trimming -Tree pruning -Tree removal -Excessive clipping removal -herbicide and pesticide application	-Tree trimming -Tree pruning -Tree removal -Excessive clipping removal -herbicide/pesticide application	-Tree trimming -Tree pruning -Tree removal -excessive clipping removal -herbicide/pesticide applications	-tree trimming -tree pruning tree removal -excessive clipping removal -herbicide/pesticide applications -provisions for noise exposure	-tree trimming -tree pruning -tree removal -excessive clipping removal -herbicide/pesticide applications
22. Does the contractor furnish supplies, equipment, supervision, tools, etc?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
23. Do employees police area before cutting?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
24. Do contracts cover cutting / cleaning ditch lines? How many?	Yes 4	Yes 10	N/A	Yes 2	Yes 1

Market Research Questionnaire	Men in Trees 10 Sherry Av Kent, OH	Excellent Grounds 341 Calandus St Charles FL	Four Seasons 57 Maine Ave Owings Mills CA	Lee's Contracting 3318 Broad St Plum Point, VA	Landscape Svc 2696-A Waiwai Honolulu HI
25. Will there be contractor reports to the Government representative? How often?	Yes Daily / monthly	Yes Weekly / monthly	Yes	Yes	Yes
26. (For products only) What are the historical repair costs?					
27. (For products only) What are the maintenance costs?					
28. (For products only) What is the life expectancy?					
29. Who else sells this product/service?					
30. Would you be willing to submit a quote if contacted by the Contracting office?					
31. Are you likely to subcontract any part of the work?					
32. What are the acquisition alternatives (e.g., GSA, etc?)					
33. What are the current distribution channels?					
35. What are the lead times required to procure the product/service?					
36. Are there any additional charges for special packing and packaging?					
37. Can you send me a copy of your typical performance work statement?					
38. What type of contract is generally used?					
39. What warranty provisions are available? At what cost?					
40. Is there a cyclical pattern to supply and demand?					
41. Have there been any recent changes in the market impacting on supply and demand?					
42. What are the pricing strategies of firms in the market?					
43. Are there any forces that might drive prices in the near future?					
44. Does volume have an impact on lower market pricing?					

Market Research Questionnaire	Men in Trees 10 Sherry Av Kent, OH	Excellent Grounds 341 Calandus St Charles FL	Four Seasons 57 Maine Ave Owings Mills CA	Lee's Contracting 3318 Broad St Plum Point, VA	Landscape Svc 2696-A Waiwai Honolulu HI
45. Will awarding at a later time result in lower prices?					
46. Anything "UNIQUE" about this contract?	NO	NO	NO	NO	I pick coconuts & do not charge the government.
47. Other.					