Release 4: Awarding & Administering Digital Service Contracts

Evaluate vendors who deliver digital services using instantaneous, objective metrics on project health, developed via appropriately applied lean thinking and agile development methods while experimenting with flexible contract design and administration strategies.

# Iteration 4.A: Awarding Digital Service Contracts

| PO # | Performance Objective | Learning Activity | New/ Reuse | Seat Time |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N/A – ALL | * **Iteration Pre-Assessment (formerly release scenario staging)**   https://dsat.gsa.gov/courses/course-v1:OMBChallengeX+DAP01+2015\_T1/courseware/cc2f78a334f24c17940c2164df6740a6/2adbd6c6cb9341b1b41accbdef51308e/ | Update from Release 4 RSS from pilot | 30 minutes |
|  |  | * **LDA** |  |  |
| 4.1 | Select a technical evaluation team with the necessary digital skills. | * **BRONZE: Online Learning/Activity: Selecting and Preparing the Technical Evaluation Team**   + Consider a time when there was a “fatal flaw” in your technical evaluation team—what happened? Why did it happen? Then, think about a time when you had the right technical evaluation team on board—what looked different about this situation? How did you find those individuals and prepare them? Post your insights on the discussion board.   + While having the right technical evaluation team at the table is critical for all acquisitions, it is particularly critical for digital service acquisition. It’s your job to ensure that you have a technical evaluation team that is capable and able to evaluate the level of requirements that are being put out in the RFQ.   + Note that you should be identifying tech evaluators early as part of the IPT. By doing this, you will be able to gauge their familiarity with the market along the way, and you can integrate them into the process of building the evaluation criteria. To determine if your team has the appropriate skillset to evaluate the digital service you’re buying, consider the following:     - Use the results of your organizational readiness assessment to help you understand where your agency is and how likely you are to have the “right” people to bring to the table for source selection. For instance, if you’re in the beginner phase, then you may not have team members who are as familiar with the digital services market and how to evaluate submissions.     - Leverage questions from the pre-program knowledge survey that you took for this program; in that survey, you were asked to rate your level of confidence with a variety of digital services topics. (Here is a link to the Word version of this survey.) Using this survey can give you an initial gauge of your team’s familiarity.   + If you find that your team doesn’t have the necessary skillset, then this is the time to elevate the situation, as this is a major risk. Talk to your CIO. If your agency has one, reach out to your digital service team to ask for support. Leverage other technical experts in your agency. Determine how you might train your technical evaluation team or partner them with other technical experts so that they learn by doing.   + If you can’t get the right team, no experts are available, and you don’t think training would be sufficient to get your team where they need to be, then you need to change your acquisition strategy. It is better to change your acquisition strategy to align with the skillsets of those you have available to evaluate responses than it is to push forward with a more innovative strategy with an unprepared technical evaluation team.   + To learn more about this topic, review the following:     - [**http://www.noblis.org/noblis-media?u=Acquisition-Series-Pt3**](http://www.noblis.org/noblis-media?u=Acquisition-Series-Pt3)This post to the Noblis web site provides a very short but important idea of the importance of selecting the right team members for the source selection.     - 18F’s Digital Acquisition Playbook provides guidance about building your IPT and the skills needed within it: <https://pages.18f.gov/digital-acquisition-playbook/process/ignition/> * **SILVER: Wiki activity: Tech Evaluation Panel Checklist:** Building off of the pre-program knowledge survey items and the resources you reviewed in the online learning, build a checklist of ways to determine the tech evaluation panel’s skillset relative to the digital service they will be asked to evaluate. What questions would you add to the list? What other techniques might you use?   + Risk assessment of tech evaluators vs. acquisition strategy     - Would we come up with mitigation strategies to have them do that? Traci to think on this * **SILVER: Finalize evaluation criteria from the classroom based on feedback received and post your evaluation criteria.** | New development | Bronze: 30 minutes  Silver: 30 minutes |
| 4.2 | Identify how to get the best value solution for your program by negotiating tradeoffs. | * **BRONZE: Online Learning: The Tradeoff Game**   + Getting best value solution – tradeoff between timeframe & getting everyone to their best level, then making tradeoff with best of the best.     - *Traci to include in the bullets that she’s putting together*   + How do you select the best value? If I have $500k, how much can I get? That’s part of tech evaluation team knowing what they’re doing. * **BRONZE: Online Learning: Negotiating with Vendors**   + Negotiation content – when bringing in digital services in, how are we getting to best value solution? Do you open negotiations or do you not? General info/examples that we can look for online about this. * **SILVER: Negotiation Tactics.** In the class wiki, create a page and share an example of when you had to negotiate with someone else. Your story does not have to be about digital services or acquisitions. However, after sharing your story, explain how the negotiation tactics you used could be repurposed and applied to a vendor negotiation. | New development | Bronze: 1 hour  Silver: 30 minutes |
| 4.3 | Determine the next steps that follow contract award. (Kickoff, Ramp-up, Baselining) | * **BRONZE: Online Learning: The Power of an Effective Debrief**    + Recognize that having debriefs actually reduces risk of protest!   + How to conduct an effective debrief for digital services – ASI publications * **BRONZE:** Post-Award Management of Agile Contracts Reading   + Read the following two articles and then respond on the discussion board:     - <https://fcw.com/blogs/lectern/2016/04/comment-kelman-schwartz-agile.aspx>     - https://fcw.com/blogs/lectern/2016/05/kelman-chenok-post-award.aspx * **BRONZE: Webinar:** How SBA Conducted Post-Award Administration Activities (Mary O’Toole as guest speaker)   + Managing an agile process; key roles and players, blockers to success, lessons learned from those doing it today   + What does it look like to onboard an agile team? Problems/situations that get them into trouble?     - Potential for contract financing – allowed under commercial items, allowing for upfront contract financing, cost of the order, to help with onboarding. FAR 12 discusses it, but there’s another that talks about contract financing re: commercial item purchases.   + What did this process look like? How long did it take?   + Challenges she encountered?   + What resources or tools can you leverage or create to get personnel in your organization onboard with the new approach?   + What can be done to clear roadblocks and keep the momentum once you’ve made an actual award? * **SILVER: Post-Award Activity Discussion**   + Select one topic covered during the webinar with Mary O’Toole that was particularly helpful or enlightening to you. Share why it was helpful or enlightening in the discussion board and engage with your classmates. |  | Bronze: 2 hours  Silver: 15 minutes |
| 4.4 (was 3.9) | Share examples of acquisition innovation. | * **BRONZE: Blog Your Acq Package!** Students will blog about their acq package based on what they worked on in the classroom**.**    + Students will write a blog about their acquisition package that they worked on in the classroom.   + The goal is to gain buy-in for the solicitation from their target audience. The blog should cover why the audience should care about it and what makes it different. Students will also need to reflect how they will use social media to post the blog. * **SILVER: Blogging Research.** Students will research what steps their own agency would have to go through to publish a blog around a solicitation instead of just posting it to a solicitation website.   + Post the results of their research on the discussion board – need to actually come back with something, not just check of completion. | New development | Bronze: 2 hours  Silver: 2 hours |
| 4.5(was 3.10) | Identify the effective characteristics of a change agent and strategies to apply at different phases of the change lifecycle as you return to your agency. (Part 2) | * **BRONZE: Online Learning: Leading Change** (original content in Pilot materials from release 6.a): https://dsat.gsa.gov/courses/course-v1:OMBChallengeX+DAP01+2015\_T1/courseware/d61dac20b3524af7b87fc3280d8e5c11/d61d3dd826d344ca874dbc831687475a/ * **SILVER: Online Learning: Building Your Resilience** (original content in Pilot materials from release 6.a): <https://dsat.gsa.gov/courses/course-v1:OMBChallengeX+DAP01+2015_T1/courseware/d61dac20b3524af7b87fc3280d8e5c11/f21b850e91794bd881d04991568e66f5/> | Reuse with minimal changes | Bronze: 30 minutes  Silver: 30 minutes |