

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (DOI)  
ACHIEVING RESULTS THROUGH COMPETITIVE SOURCING  
FISCAL YEAR 2006**

DOI completed one standard competition of 52 FTE and fifteen streamlined competitions involving 575 FTE with a total projected annual savings of \$6 M over the next five years. Following is an example of results achieved through an inter-agency competition led by Bureau of Land Management

**Competition Summary of the Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) Competition.**

**1. Describe the activity competed.**

A highlight of this year's program is the successful completion of the Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) maintenance competition in Boise, Idaho with an estimated savings of \$1.2 Million over the next five years. The study is one of the first interagency competitions providing consolidated maintenance and customer assistance support of the weather stations across two agencies and five bureaus: USDA Forest Service and the following Department of the Interior Bureaus: BIA, BLM, FWS & NPS.

**2. Identify the number of FTE studied.**

There were 27 DOI FTE and 10 Forest Service FTE involved in the competition.

**3. Identify the source selection strategy used.**

Streamlined w/MEO.

**4. Describe expected results (savings/improvements).**

The MEO became the winning service provider with an estimated savings of \$1.2 Million over the next five years. Customer assistance support was centralized and the PWS expanded the scope of operations to include managing and providing formal training to weather station customers.

During the development of the PWS, all tasks were reviewed to validate their contribution to the organization's mission. The PWS team found some tasks that had evolved over time and were either duplicative or outside of the scope of the study. These tasks were not included in the PWS.

The MEO proposed new and more efficient shipping, receiving and inventory operations. These functions were separated from the local warehouse organization in order to reduce hours lost in needless administration and account verification tasks. A computerized maintenance management system is being implemented to improve accountability and tracking functions. By improving productivity, the MEO will be able to absorb the new

training workload while reducing the staffing by 8 FTE. Due to the increased volume of weather station repairs expected over the next five years, there is likelihood that the number of FTE will be increased incrementally to add 1.16 FTE in Year 5 of the contract.

**5. How has competitive sourcing helped the agency achieve results?**

Competitive sourcing was the tool which allowed the two agencies to consolidate the competition utilizing a methodology that is consistent across Government.

**6. Discuss shortcomings, if any and adjustments made to achieve expectations.**

Lessons learned include the following:

- Establish an Inter-Agency Planning Team. During the planning phase of an inter-agency team, there are many discretionary decisions that must be resolved early on such as which agency will administer any support contract, which agency will take the lead or will all teams be co-led. Make sure the team members can speak for their agency.
- Prior Inter-Agency Coordination. There must be an agreed upon process for approving the recommendations of the planning efforts. This coordination process is meant to preclude a situation where one agency approves the recommendations during planning and the other agency(s) does not. The planning effort of this competition was one of the reasons that DOI and USDA created an interagency Charter group to advise the five bureaus on all issues related to wild land fire competitions.
- Managing Expectations. The decision to enter into an inter-agency A-76 effort must include a clear description of what is being agreed to. This includes the key areas to be addressed by the planning team, the level of effort expected from each agency, and any restrictions or constraints placed on the planning team. In addition, sufficient time must be provided to the planning team to allow the team to accomplish its stated goals.
- Feasibility vice Preliminary Planning. The USDA has specific guidance requiring the conduct of a feasibility study that goes beyond the requirements of Circular A-76 prior to making the decision to enter into a competition. The DOI follows the preliminary planning guidance provided in the Circular. Most of the information collected is the same; however the team realized a need to prepare a written document outlining the planning steps required by both agencies to assure compliance with Departmental and OMB guidance.
- The transition period will take approximately six month due to the start-up of the new tracking system. There was no adverse impact to employees.

## **JOINT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DOI HUMAN RESOURCES AND COMPETITIVE SOURCING OFFICES DURING FISCAL YEAR 2006**

During FY 2006, the Office of Human Resources (HR) and the Center for Competitive Sourcing Excellence (Center) worked together to review the DOI Strategic Human Capital Management Plan for areas where competitive sourcing might be used as the tool to address skill imbalances, competency gaps and organizational redundancies. Specific examples include:

- Information Technology (IT): In order to determine where skill imbalances, competency gaps and organizational redundancies exist in IT across the Agency, a team consisting of IT, HR and Center representatives began meeting monthly in FY '05 to determine the best strategy to identify imbalances and gaps and the steps necessary to correct them. Based on the planning efforts accomplished during FY 2005, DOI has announced one competition of IT security FTE and one competition of IT Help Desk FTE. Both competitions were announced during the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2006 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). We expect these competitions to serve as pilot projects for other DOI bureaus to improve skill gaps and update technological advances in accordance with the DOI Human Capital Plan.
- The Center and the Office of Civil Rights drafted joint DOI guidance on FAIR Act coding of disabled employees. The guidance, soon to be issued by the DOI Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, will include the proper placement of disabled employees' workload during a competitive sourcing competition.
- The Center worked closely with the Office of Human Resources to develop the FY 2006 VSIP/VERA request. The Center and HR worked together to provide the Office of Personnel Management with additional information as requested. HR and the Center jointly kept Bureaus and employees up-to-date on the status of the request.
- The Chief Human Capital Officer reviewed and approved the DOI 2006 Green Plan.
- In support of the DOI Human Capital Plan, Part 3, p. 24, Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service are reviewing human resource processes using competitive sourcing tools.