



The Lab -  
Cultivating Acquisition Innovation  
at the Department of Commerce

Have any questions or ideas? Email [TheLab@doc.gov](mailto:TheLab@doc.gov)



# What is the added value?

Reach new vendors, particularly innovative small businesses or take advantage of gig economy

IMPROVE CONTRACTOR UNDERSTANDING OF GOVERNMENT NEED

Design contract T and C to improve performance and outcomes

Reduce the time from 'I need' to 'I have'

Increase small businesses participation

Reduce risk of protest and risk of successful protest

*Decide on major milestones and strategies early on for optimal success*

Reduce administrative burden and therefore reduce cost

*Reduce vendor competition cost*

Improve the competitive vendor pool for better program outcomes





# What is The Lab?



Scope of The Lab is to:

- Experiment with new and underutilized acquisition techniques including program management.
- Collaborate to support acquisition of emerging technologies.
- De-risk acquisition initiatives through PBSA, metrics, and formation of IPTs.

Our website: [www.commerce.gov/oam/lab](http://www.commerce.gov/oam/lab)



# The Innovation Council

## Innovation Council

- 15 Council Members
- Ensures Bureau representation
- Provides guidance and feedback on Lab-specific goals
- Votes on major milestones





# Initiatives

## Outreach

### Internal to DOC

- Outreach sessions introduce The Lab to a larger audience during Bureau meetings, and meetings with PM, COR, and Procurement communities across the DOC
- Attended team training events and met with individual team members to discuss their acquisition strategy

## Partnerships

- Collaborating with DHS PIL, GSA-CSAW, and NASA Center of Excellence for Collaborative Innovation to enrich offerings to the DOC community and federal acquisition community at large





# Initiatives

## Survey - October 2021

- Over 340 responses
- Received feedback on training, innovation techniques, best practices, and perceived barriers
- Created baseline for training, experience, and possible coaches

## Training

- Over 480 staff have attended training
- Over 3,000 training hours completed
- Training class survey analysis



# Initiatives

## Case Studies

- FY21: 2 completed
- FY22: 6 cases are in progress

## Newsletter

- Issue #1 (February 2022) distributed to the DOC acquisition community

## GAO Cases on Innovative Approaches

- 20 cases summarized and linked on The Lab website
- Smart risk-taking learning opportunities from GAO cases





# The Lab Website

## Contains:

- Question & Answer repository
- GAO Cases on Innovative Approaches
- Training courses relevant to the community
- Resources
- Collaboration opportunities
- Case Studies

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# Idea Bank

## Idea Bank

- Submitted via [TheLab@doc.gov](mailto:TheLab@doc.gov)
- Human-centered design thinking with idea submitters moving through the process with their idea all the way to execution
- All ideas go through an evaluation & voting process
- Can share templates along with the idea or from a case study
- Sub-committees formed on two ideas requiring more in-depth work – one on small business vendor feedback sessions is nearing completion





<https://www.commerce.gov/oam/lab/badgingprogram>

# Badging Program

## How does it work?

- Open to DOC employees
- Applications submitted to TheLab@doc.gov
- The Lab team verifies information and issues a badge
- Badge levels build upon each other
- Innovation Council, who are Bureau representatives, have voting rights to make changes to badging program
- CLPs are granted to participants in accordance with CAM 1301.670 Appendix C for knowledge-sharing activities

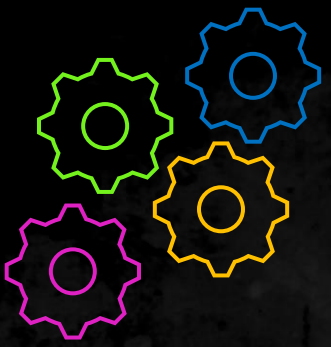




# Policy

## Commerce Acquisition Manual Changes Chapter 1307.1

- - Proposed amendment - Actions requiring written acquisition plans will include requirement to address the use of innovative program management and procurement techniques.



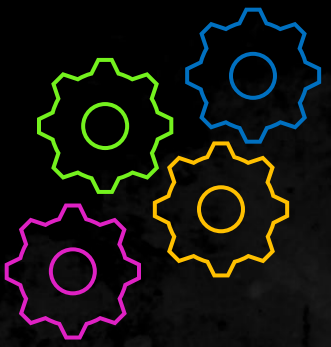
# Growth Opportunity

Open Opportunities Detail Announcement Link

<https://openopps.usajobs.gov/tasks/3036?fromSearch>

- Non-reimbursable
- Government wide
- Certified at any level of FAC-C, FAC-COR and FACP/PM
- Participated in acquisition efforts
- GS 11-14 or equivalent





## Take Aways



Acquisition is a team sport – The Lab is focused on bringing together the voices of all participants from idea formation to contract and close-out. COs, CORs, PMs, Procurement Policy, Procurement Attorneys, and other SMEs are actively involved at the strategic level, as well as being part of the team during the case studies we are working to highlight.



The Lab team includes all acquisition team members who provide knowledge to the entire team, operating within their comfort zone. We will not pressure anyone to implement innovations they are not comfortable with.



A Procurement Attorney supports The Lab and is actively involved in The Lab program office strategic conversations.



Lifecycle approach: From idea formation all the way to close out and disposal of resultant product/service with attention to climate impact (Earth is a stakeholder). We are inspired by Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) Program Management strategies.



Leadership support is imperative, and The Lab works closely with the executive team to cultivate innovation.