

The two hottest contracting vehicles for 2014
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Some of my favorite news features at the end of the year are the in-and-out lists and “year in review” posts. It has been such an unusual year in federal contracting that it poses a challenge to think about what would be considered out in 2013 and in for 2014.

Sequestration jumps to mind – hope it’s out, but wouldn’t be surprised if it stays in. The Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act is out after being removed from the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2014, but there are indications it could still be in as stand-alone legislation.

As for a government contracting year in review, I think this covers it: sequestration, debt limits, delayed fiscal 2014 budget, federal furloughs, government shutdown and the looming possibility of sequestration part deux.

That said, it’s easy to pick out certain ins and outs. A big part of my job is researching and watching federal contracting opportunities, then finding common elements and tracing trends, and finally sorting them into buckets so our customers can quickly build pipelines based on their needs.

Based on those observations, here are the two types of opportunities that were in for 2013 and will remain so for 2014.
Hot contracts: GWACs and IDIQs

With all the roadblocks caused by sequestration and the shutdown, you might think that nothing got done this year at the federal level, but there was notable progress in the governmentwide acquisition contract (GWAC) procurement arena.

Two groups of opportunities intersected in both 2013 and 2014: top federal opportunities and task order-based contracts in the form of GWACs and agency-specific indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contracts.

When you think about big opportunities that fell under both categories in 2013, which three come to mind? The General Services Administration’s One Acquisition Solution for Integrated Services (OASIS), NASA’s Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V and Health and Human Services’ Chief Information Officer - Commodities and Solutions (CIO-CS).

The first quarter of fiscal 2013 was a non-starter, with little activity on each of the programs. Keep in mind that there were pressing issues at hand, including elections, a lame duck congress and questions about the debt ceiling and sequestration.

Following the delay and subsequent enactment of sequestration, along with the delayed budget request, there were reasons to wonder if any of the top procurements’ solicitations were going to be released in 2013. After all, in Deltek’s top opportunities for fiscal 2013, we had estimated that both OASIS and CIO-CS requests for proposal would be on the street in January, with SEWP V expected in May.

But by the end of June, what we had in hand were draft solicitations, increased ceiling values and a name change:

- The contract name CIO-New changed to CIO-CS in late January
- All three drafts were issued by the end of March
- OASIS jumped from \$12 to \$30 billion
- SEWP V increased from \$10.5 to \$20 billion
- CIO-CS jumped from \$6 to \$10 billion

As we entered the fourth quarter of the fiscal year and furloughs came into play, things just took off – the OASIS solicitations were on the street at the end of July, followed by SEWP V two weeks later, and the CIO-CS release anticipated by the end of August.

With the threat of a government shutdown, however, followed by the real thing, activities slowed. SEWP V and OASIS proposal due dates were delayed by a few weeks, and CIO-CS was held back.

Post-shutdown, OASIS is now on track, with awards anticipated in January 2014. SEWP V proposals are due in mid-December, with awards expected in April 2014, but CIO-CS has yet to be released.

What to expect in 2014

This leaves us at the end of the first quarter of fiscal 2014, ready to ring in the new year, so what's in?

There are few top GWAC and agency-specific IDIQ opportunities to consider for inclusion in contracting companies' pipelines next year.

CIO-CS, the high-dollar value ceiling program for IT commodities and solutions mentioned above, has over forty incumbent contracts expected to expire in November 2014. This offers a bit of wiggle room for solicitation release, but expect it to be released in the near term.

Professional and Technical Services, or Pro-Tech, is a new contract vehicle out of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for professional and technical services. Valued at \$5 billion, what catches my eye is that while it will be a full and open competition, the majority of awards will be reserved for small businesses.

And, of course, there are behemoths like the Information Technology Enterprise Solutions — 3 Hardware (ITES-3H) Computer Hardware, Enterprise Solutions and Software (CHESS), with a \$25 billion ceiling. We knew the Army's Strategic Services Sourcing 2nd Generation (S32G) was a behemoth, but it looks like it could grow even larger. Deltek spoke with a representative from the contracting office and confirmed that the Army's Rapid Response 4th Generation (R2-4G), with an estimated ceiling value of \$16.4 billion, will be combined with S32G procurement, which

had been valued at \$30 billion. The government plans to form the procurement team in January 2014, and anticipates an aggressive procurement schedule.

Both are follow-ons to highly-utilized vehicles with procurement activity expected to start in the spring. Also expected in the spring is the rolling admission for the Navy's SeaPort-e 2014, with a \$19.5 billion ceiling.