

Part 39 - Acquisition of Information Technology

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Parent topic: [Federal Acquisition Regulation](#)

39.000 Scope of part.

This part prescribes acquisition policies and procedures for use in acquiring—

(a) Information technology, including financial management systems, consistent with other parts of this regulation, OMB Circular No.A-127, Financial Management Systems and OMB Circular No.A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources.

(b) Information and communication technology (see [2.101\(b\)](#)).

39.001 Applicability.

This part applies to the acquisition of—

(a) Information technology by or for the use of agencies except for acquisitions of information

technology for national security systems. However, acquisitions of information technology for national security systems shall be conducted in accordance with [40 U.S.C. 11302](#) with regard to requirements for performance and results-based management; the role of the agency Chief Information Officer in acquisitions; and accountability. These requirements are addressed in OMB Circular No. A-130; and

(b) Information and communication technology by or for the use of agencies or for the use of the public, unless an exception (see [39.204](#)) or an exemption (see [39.205](#)) applies. See [36 CFR 1194.1](#).

39.002 Definitions.

As used in this part-

Modular contracting means use of one or more contracts to acquire information technology systems in successive, interoperable increments.

National security system means any telecommunications or information system operated by the United States Government, the function, operation, or use of which-

- (1) Involves intelligence activities;
- (2) Involves cryptologic activities related to national security;
- (3) Involves command and control of military forces;
- (4) Involves equipment that is an integral part of a weapon or weapons system; or

(5) Is critical to the direct fulfillment of military or intelligence missions. This does not include a system that is to be used for routine administrative and business applications, such as payroll, finance, logistics, and personnel management applications.

Subpart 39.1 - General

39.101 Policy.

(a)

(1) In acquiring information technology, agencies shall identify their requirements pursuant to-

(i) OMB Circular A-130, including consideration of security of resources, protection of privacy, national security and emergency preparedness, accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and energy efficiency;

(ii) Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT®) standards (see [23.704](#));

(iii) Policies to enable power management, double-sided printing, and other energy-efficient or environmentally preferable features on all agency electronic products; and

(iv) Best management practices for energy-efficient management of servers and Federal data centers.

(2) When developing an acquisition strategy, contracting officers should consider the rapidly changing nature of information technology through market research (see part 10) and the application of

technology refreshment techniques.

(b) Agencies must follow OMB Circular A-127, Financial Management Systems, when acquiring financial management systems. Agencies may acquire only core financial management software certified by the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program.

(c) In acquiring information technology, agencies shall include the appropriate information technology security policies and requirements, including use of common security configurations available from the National Institute of Standards and Technology's website at <http://checklists.nist.gov>. Agency contracting officers should consult with the requiring official to ensure the appropriate standards are incorporated.

(d) When acquiring information technology using Internet Protocol, agencies must include the appropriate Internet Protocol compliance requirements in accordance with [11.002\(g\)](#).

(e) Contracting officers shall not purchase any hardware, software, or services developed or provided by Kaspersky Lab that the Government will use on or after October 1, 2018. (See [4.2002](#).)

(f)

(1) On or after August 13, 2019, contracting officers shall not procure or obtain, or extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain, any equipment, system, or service that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system on or after August 13, 2019, unless an exception applies or a waiver is granted. (See subpart [4.21](#).)

(2) On or after August 13, 2020, agencies are prohibited from entering into a contract, or extending or renewing a contract, with an entity that uses any equipment, system, or service that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system, unless an exception applies or a waiver is granted (see subpart [4.21](#)). This prohibition applies to the use of covered telecommunications equipment or services, regardless of whether that use is in performance of work under a Federal contract.

39.102 Management of risk.

(a) Prior to entering into a contract for information technology, an agency should analyze risks, benefits, and costs. (See [part 7](#) for additional information regarding requirements definition.) Reasonable risk taking is appropriate as long as risks are controlled and mitigated. Contracting and program office officials are jointly responsible for assessing, monitoring and controlling risk when selecting projects for investment and during program implementation.

(b) Types of risk may include schedule risk, risk of technical obsolescence, cost risk, risk implicit in a particular contract type, technical feasibility, dependencies between a new project and other projects or systems, the number of simultaneous high risk projects to be monitored, funding availability, and program management risk.

(c) Appropriate techniques should be applied to manage and mitigate risk during the acquisition of information technology. Techniques include, but are not limited to: prudent project management; use of modular contracting; thorough acquisition planning tied to budget planning by the program, finance and contracting offices; continuous collection and evaluation of risk-based assessment data; prototyping prior to implementation; post implementation reviews to determine actual project cost, benefits and returns; and focusing on risks and returns using quantifiable measures.

39.103 Modular contracting.

(a) This section implements [41 U.S.C. 2308](#). Modular contracting is intended to reduce program risk and to incentivize contractor performance while meeting the Government's need for timely access to rapidly changing technology. Consistent with the agency's information technology architecture, agencies should, to the maximum extent practicable, use modular contracting to acquire major systems (see [2.101](#)) of information technology. Agencies may also use modular contracting to acquire non-major systems of information technology.

(b) When using modular contracting, an acquisition of a system of information technology may be divided into several smaller acquisition increments that-

(1) Are easier to manage individually than would be possible in one comprehensive acquisition;

(2) Address complex information technology objectives incrementally in order to enhance the likelihood of achieving workable systems or solutions for attainment of those objectives;

(3) Provide for delivery, implementation, and testing of workable systems or solutions in discrete increments, each of which comprises a system or solution that is not dependent on any subsequent increment in order to perform its principal functions;

(4) Provide an opportunity for subsequent increments to take advantage of any evolution in technology or needs that occur during implementation and use of the earlier increments; and

(5) Reduce risk of potential adverse consequences on the overall project by isolating and avoiding custom-designed components of the system.

(c) The characteristics of an increment may vary depending upon the type of information technology being acquired and the nature of the system being developed. The following factors may be considered:

(1) To promote compatibility, the information technology acquired through modular contracting for each increment should comply with common or commercially acceptable information technology standards when available and appropriate, and shall conform to the agency's master information technology architecture.

(2) The performance requirements of each increment should be consistent with the performance requirements of the completed, overall system within which the information technology will function and should address interface requirements with succeeding increments.

(d) For each increment, contracting officers shall choose an appropriate contracting technique that facilitates the acquisition of subsequent increments. Pursuant to [parts 16](#) and [17](#) of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, contracting officers shall select the contract type and method appropriate to the circumstances (*e.g.*, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contracts, single contract with options, successive contracts, multiple awards, task order contracts). Contract(s) shall be structured to ensure that the Government is not required to procure additional increments.

(e) To avoid obsolescence, a modular contract for information technology should, to the maximum extent practicable, be awarded within 180 days after the date on which the solicitation is issued. If award cannot be made within 180 days, agencies should consider cancellation of the solicitation in accordance with [14.209](#) or [15.206\(e\)](#). To the maximum extent practicable, deliveries under the contract should be scheduled to occur within 18 months after issuance of the solicitation.

39.104 Information technology services.

When acquiring information technology services, solicitations must not describe any minimum experience or educational requirement for proposed contractor personnel unless the contracting officer determines that the needs of the agency-

- (a) Cannot be met without that requirement; or
- (b) Require the use of other than a performance-based acquisition (see [subpart 37.6](#)).

39.105 Privacy.

Agencies shall ensure that contracts for information technology address protection of privacy in accordance with the Privacy Act ([5 U.S.C.552a](#)) and [part 24](#). In addition, each agency shall ensure that contracts for the design, development, or operation of a system of records using commercial information technology services or information technology support services include the following:

- (a) Agency rules of conduct that the contractor and the contractor's employees shall be required to follow.
- (b) A list of the anticipated threats and hazards that the contractor must guard against.
- (c) A description of the safeguards that the contractor must specifically provide.
- (d) Requirements for a program of Government inspection during performance of the contract that will ensure the continued efficacy and efficiency of safeguards and the discovery and countering of new threats and hazards.

39.106 Contract clause.

The contracting officer shall insert a clause substantially the same as the clause at [52.239-1](#), Privacy or Security Safeguards, in solicitations and contracts for information technology which require security of information technology, and/or are for the design, development, or operation of a system of records using commercial information technology services or support services.

Subpart 39.2 - Information and Communication Technology

39.201 Scope of subpart.

- (a) This subpart implements section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([29 U.S.C. 794d](#)), and the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board's (U.S. Access Board) information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility standards at [36 CFR 1194.1](#).
- (b) Further information on Section 508 is available via the Internet at <http://www.section508.gov>.
- (c) When acquiring ICT, agencies must ensure that—

(1) Federal employees with disabilities have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access and use by Federal employees who are not individuals with disabilities; and

(2) Members of the public with disabilities seeking information or services from an agency have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by members of the public who are not individuals with disabilities.

39.202 Definition.

Undue burden, as used in this subpart, means a significant difficulty or expense.

39.203 Applicability.

(a) *General.* Unless an exception at [39.204](#) or an exemption at [39.205](#) applies, acquisitions for ICT supplies and services shall meet the applicable ICT accessibility standards at [36 CFR 1194.1](#).

(b) *Indefinite-quantity contracts.* Confirmation of an exception or a determination of an exemption is not required prior to award of an indefinite-quantity contract, except for requirements that are to be satisfied by initial award. The contract must identify which supplies and services the contractor indicates as compliant and show where full details of compliance can be found (*e.g.*, vendor's or other exact website location).

(c) *Task order or delivery order.* At the time of issuance of a task order or delivery order under an indefinite-quantity contract, the requiring and ordering activities shall ensure compliance with the ICT accessibility standards and document an exception or exemption if applicable. Any task order or delivery order, or portion thereof, issued for a noncompliant ICT item shall be supported by the appropriate exception or exemption documented by the requiring activity.

(d) *Commercial items.* When acquiring commercial items, an agency must comply with those ICT accessibility standards that can be met with supplies or services that are available in the commercial marketplace and that best address the agency's needs, but see [39.205\(a\)\(3\)](#).

(e) *Legacy ICT.* Any component or portion of existing ICT (*i.e.*, ICT that was procured, maintained, or used on or before January 18, 2018) is not required to comply with the current ICT accessibility standards if it—

(1) Complies with an earlier standard issued pursuant to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([29 U.S.C. 794d](#)), which is set forth in Appendix D to [36 CFR 1194.1](#); and

(2) Has not been altered (*i.e.*, a change that affects interoperability, the user interface, or access to information or data) after January 18, 2018.

(f) *Alterations of legacy ICT.* When altering any component or portion of existing ICT, after January 18, 2018, the component or portion must be modified to conform to the current ICT accessibility standards in [36 CFR 1194.1](#).

39.204 Exceptions.

(a) The requirements in [39.203](#) do not apply to acquisitions for—

(1) *National security systems.* ICT operated by agencies as part of a national security system, as defined by [40 U.S.C 11103\(a\)](#);

(2) *Incidental contract items.* ICT acquired by a contractor incidental to a contract, *i.e.*, for in-house use by the contractor to perform the contract; or

(3) *Maintenance or monitoring spaces.* The portions of ICT that are operable parts (*i.e.*, hardware-based user controls for activating, deactivating, or adjusting ICT) or status indicators, and that are located in spaces frequented only by service personnel for maintenance, repair, or occasional monitoring of equipment.

(b) The contracting officer shall receive, as a part of the requirements documentation, written confirmation from the requiring activity that an exception, in accordance with paragraph (a)(1), (2), or (3) of this section, applies to the ICT supply or service (see [7.105\(b\)\(5\)\(iv\)](#)). This documentation shall be maintained in the contract file.

39.205 Exemptions.

(a) *Allowable exemptions.* An agency may grant an exemption for the following:

(1) *Undue burden.* When an agency determines the acquisition of ICT conforming with all the applicable ICT accessibility standards would impose an undue burden on the agency, compliance with the ICT accessibility standards is only required to the extent that it would not impose an undue burden. In determining whether conformance to one or more ICT accessibility standards would impose an undue burden, an agency shall consider the extent to which conformance would impose significant difficulty or expense considering the agency resources available to the program or component for which the ICT supply or service is being procured.

(2) *Fundamental alteration.* When an agency determines that acquisition of ICT that conforms with all applicable ICT accessibility standards would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the ICT, such acquisition is required to conform only to the extent that conformance will not result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the ICT.

(3) *Nonavailability of conforming commercial items.* Where there are no commercial items that fully conform to the ICT accessibility standards, the agency shall procure the supplies or service available in the commercial marketplace that best meets the ICT accessibility standards consistent with the agency's needs.

(b) *Alternative means of access.* An agency shall provide individuals with disabilities access to and use of information and data by an alternative means to meet the identified needs when an exemption in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), or (3) of this section applies.

(c) *Documentation.* When an exemption applies, the contracting officer shall obtain, as part of the requirements documentation, a written determination from the requiring activity explaining the basis for the exemption in paragraphs (a)(1), (2) or (3) of this section. This documentation shall be maintained in the contract file.

(1) *Undue burden.* A determination of undue burden shall address why and to what extent compliance with applicable ICT accessibility standards constitutes an undue burden.

(2) *Fundamental alteration.* A determination of fundamental alteration shall address the extent to which compliance with the applicable ICT accessibility standards would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the ICT.

(3) *Nonavailability of conforming commercial items.* A determination of commercial items nonavailability shall include—

(i) A description of the market research performed;

(ii) A listing of the requirements that cannot be met; and

(iii)The rationale for determining that the ICT to be procured best meets the ICT accessibility standards in [36 CFR 1194.1](#), consistent with the agency's needs.