NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL

Partnership Intermediary Agreements: Analysis of Effective Practices in the Air Force Global Strike Command

Allan E. Cameron

Dr. Rene G. Rendon
Naval Postgraduate School

The Nation's Premiere Defense Research University

Monterey, California
WWW.NPS.EDU

Background

- The majority of Department of Defense procurements are structured using contracts based on the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

- Some DoD agencies are authorized to use non-FAR instruments as a way of acquiring innovative, agile, and more collaborative solutions in a timelier manner. Partnership Intermediary Agreement (PIA) is one type of non-FAR instrument.

- DoD has experienced successful acquisition outcomes using PIAs, however the challenges in using PIAs include identifying best practices, lessons learned, and successful use cases and disseminating this information to other agencies for adoption.

Research Approach

- Research Purpose
  - The purpose of this research was to discuss effective practices in the use of PIAs within the U.S. Air Force.
- Research Question
  - What are effective practices in the use of PIAs that will foster innovation, maximize collaborative outcomes, and achieve considerable return on investment?
- Research Method
  - Case study approach of the AFGSC PIA with the Cyber Innovation Center (CIC) for support and research within the nuclear deterrence and operations domain.

Background

AIR FORCE GLOBAL STRIKE COMMAND

cyber innovation center™

CYBER.ORG
THE ACADEMIC INITIATIVE OF THE CYBER INNOVATION CENTER

STRIKEWERX

Methodology

- Examination of current congressional statutes, government reports, legislature subcommittee hearings, and third-party research reports.
- Policy analysis, content review, and thematic analysis through categorical grouping of relevant and publicly available literature.
- Synthesis of analysis with direct insights acquired from fieldwork by one author who has eleven years of practitioner experience in the CIC PIA.

Effective Practice	Literature Analysis	Application at AFGSC
Effective Sharing of Information	Cecchi-Dimeglio et al., 2022; Peña et al., 2020; Kotila et al, 2023;	The Cyber Innovation Center (CIC) provides a platform through its collaborative environment within the Cyber National Park in Shreveport LA. AFGSC has infused the CIC into the Science & Technology department on Barksdale AFB.
Standardized Contracting Processes	Dunn, 2022; Vergun, 2021; Peña et al., 2020;	At the CIC, the wide breadth of differentiation for collaborative project designs (CPDs) under a Collaborative Project Order (CPO) can create unfamiliarity when managing the contracting process. This unfamiliarity can lead to noise interference decision-making, miscommunication with team members, and delayed award by seasoned contracting officers.
Proximity of Location for Partnership Intermediary	DAF T3 Annual Report 2022, 2023; Peña et al., 2020; APEX, 2021;	The Cyber Innovation Center (CIC) is located 17 miles from Barksdale AFB the HQ for AFGSC in Shreverport, LA. The CIC is a hub for research and development, prototyping, as well as hosting Industry Days.
Aligned Performance Evaluation Metrics	Peña et al., 2020;	At AFGSC, performance evaluation and compliance are key components for measuring the success of the CIC. The technology derived through the duration of CPDs are monitored for defense uses, modifications, and progress of development. The AFGSC and the CIC have maintained continual awareness within the program and acquisition team, which led to effectively maintaining schedule, milestones, and performance accountability on individual projects with high returns on investment.
Lessons Learned and After-Action Reports	DAF T3 Annual Report 2022, 2023; GAO, 2020;	Non-traditional contractors have provided the Global Strike Command PIA with multiple, varied solutions to problem statements, and the PIA has significantly benefited from employing these after-action reports and lessons learned as advanced market and concept research for future acquisitions.

Implications of Findings

- The importance of effective communication between members of the government and the PI acquisition team is paramount for successful implementation and administration of the PIA.
- Streamlined contracting processes enables the government to have a higher likelihood for achieving efficient administrative implementation and execution as well as significantly increased cost savings.
- The proximity of the location of the PI to the government acquisition team can be a principal measure in gauging the effectiveness of the PIA.

Implications of Findings (cont.)

- Continuous measurement, tracking, and analysis of the performance of a PIA is critical for optimizing efficiency and effectiveness. By tracking the progress and performance of individual projects, the government and the PI can develop a structured collaborative environment.

- Lessons learned and after-action reports are necessary to gauge the effectiveness of the PIA as well as refine future project design implementation and practices. Detailed thorough reports on project design outcomes enables the government team to make more informed decisions when constructing future project problem statements.

Recommendations

- Fielding of technology derived from a PIA must provide continuity between stakeholders at each stage of the acquisition process to ensure transfer of innovative technological outcomes as well as government usability on future acquisitions resultant in effective cost-savings and return on investment.

- Streamlined PIA contracting processes must provide a transparent roadmap through the duration of the PIA's life cycle across the contract life cycle phases and technology transfer outcomes.

- Establish proximity as a driving factor for facilitating collaborative and more efficient outcomes regarding problem identification, technical approach and solutions, and overall cost savings.

Recommendations

- Ensure the acquisition team maintains awareness and knowledge of tracking and reporting metrics of specific projects in conjunction with the PI. This includes monitoring and collaborating on the PI's monthly and quarterly financial compliance statements, performance-oriented outcome meetings, and end-state technology transfer summarization meetings.

- The government and PI should establish after-action reports, metrics, and deliverables to evaluate the success of PIAs and communicate these findings across the DoD. The DoD would benefit from reports on milestones, outcomes, data/licensing rights, and deliverables, thus providing enhanced awareness of technologies not readily available within the defense industry.

Questions/Comments

Rene G. Rendon
Associate Professor
U.S. Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA
rgrendon@nps.edu