

[Pentagon Launches New Approach to Acquire Enterprisewide Cloud Capabilities](#)

DoD looks to build artificial intelligence programs on top of new cloud program.

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Dana Deasy, Department of Defense chief information officer, explains the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center at the Defense Intelligence Agency's 2018 Department of Defense Worldwide Conference, August 13, 2018. (Brian Murphy/DIA photo)

The Defense Department is taking a whole-of-government approach with its enterprisewide cloud acquisition by releasing its request for information through the General Services Administration, a shift from earlier this year.

The Defense Enterprise Office Solution [RFI](#) went live Oct. 25, a partnership between GSA Federal Acquisition Service, DoD and Defense Information Systems Agency, to look for sources who can meet the first capability of DEOS.

This is part of DOD's overall Enterprise Collaboration and Productivity Services program. The department is looking to implement a secure, seamlessly integrated, commercial cloud-based software-as-a-service to replace legacy enterprise IT services, according to the RFI.

Once it has enterprise cloud productivity, the DoD can look into putting artificial intelligence on top of those capabilities, ensuring Command Control Communications is properly modernized, and top it all off with the appropriate cybersecurity, DOD CIO Dana Deasy said Oct. 25 at a Pentagon press briefing.

"Our strategy has and will continue to be that of a multi-cloud, multi-vendor environment," he said. This includes cloud for general purpose computing needs, along with what Deasy calls a "fit-for-purpose cloud," consisting of internal and commercial clouds with a unique purpose.

And that's what's behind DEOS.

Unwrapping the RFI

Capability one includes a productivity suite, messaging, content management and collaboration tools, ranging from a word processor and database management to email native audio and video, file sharing capabilities and a web portal.

This first instance will be a managed commercial cloud service, including enterprise hardware, software licenses, and deployment and sustainment services enterprisewide. Deasy said the DoD is looking for some sort of subscription-based offering.

And, RFI requirements cover Sensitive but Unclassified Internet Protocol Data Network known as NIPRnet, and the Secret Internet Protocol Data known as SIPRNet. As is, over an 11-year period, DoD spends more than \$9 billion on productivity services for NIPRNET, SIPRNet and deployed elements.

The RFI will take a look at the offerings and what's available, and responses for the

RFI are due Nov. 9.

The feedback will help develop the request for quotation for DoD's specific requirements, which is expected to be released in early 2019, according to Murphy. GSA is also planning industry days in December to get the DoD the feedback it needs, with a goal to award the contract on DEOS in the third quarter of 2019.

But it's still unclear whether the DoD will award multiple vendors for capability one, or a single vendor. Emily Murphy, GSA administrator, said at the press briefing that the RFI asks for feedback from vendors on the challenges associated with a single-award and multi-award in order to assess what is best.

And if a vendor isn't already on GSA's IT Schedule 70 list, Murphy said the administration is committed to working with vendors interested in the [FASt Lane](#) program to help them qualify in time for DEOS RFP, which is also one of the reasons for the multiple industry days.

Change of Heart

But the DEOS acquisition intent was originally announced in May through DoD as a \$7.8 billion single award, with the potential for a 10 year contract, according to [DISA](#). In fact, a [draft](#) RFP was open for comments in May and the RFP was expected to be released in the fourth quarter of the fiscal 2018 year.

Though those numbers haven't changed, what positioned the DoD to release an RFI through GSA's [IT Schedule 70](#) — the multi-award IT procurement vehicle that provides technology products and services from more than 5,000 industry leaders — rather than its own RFP?

Deasy said when he joined the DoD and learned about DEOS, he challenged the team to explore a whole-of-government approach before going on its own.

He met with fellow IT government leaders to understand what was already available to DoD, "because one of my mantras is efficiency in everything we do," Deasy said. After understanding GSA's contracting approach, and in efforts to not reinvent the wheel, he realized this whole-of-government route was a more efficient one.

And Federal CIO Suzette Kent sees these benefits from a civilian agency side, too.

“The ability to have our partners at the DoD and their view toward innovation, providing insight as they go forward, and potential opportunities to leverage those in better ways across other areas of government is something we’re excited about,” Kent said at the press briefing.

Plus, using IT Schedule 70 to procure its enterprisewide cloud solution for email, productivity and collaboration, could establish a baseline for GSA to scale up the solution across the federal government in the future.

DoD is using a proven contracting vehicle and GSA’s procurement expertise to focus on the services that go with the products. Murphy called the DEOS contract an “important catalyst for change in enterprise IT procurement.”

Aside from governmentwide benefits, Essye Miller, DoD principal deputy CIO, outlined immediate benefits for DoD at the briefing, which includes taking DoD out of its desperate environment operations and predominantly on-prem productivity capabilities. Rather, taking advantage of the commercial community sets DoD up for increased capability, the ability to focus more on cybersecurity and less on commodity IT, real-time upgrades and access to innovation from the provider, and greater transparency with regard to DoD IT spending.

“Moving to a commercial vendor gives us opportunity . . . not only to measure use and capability, but the amount of investment,” she said.

And though some agencies and offices in DoD have their own contracts, the intent is for all components of DoD to eventually migrate to this enterprise capability.

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