

GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee (GAP FAC) Industry Partnerships Subcommittee Meeting

June 21, 2023

The GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Industry Partnerships Subcommittee convened for a public meeting at 3:00 PM on June 21, 2023, virtually via Zoom, with Kristin Seaver, Chair, and Farad Ali, Co-Chair, presiding.

In accordance with FACA, as amended, 5 U.S.C. App 2, the meeting was open to the public from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM EST.

Committee Members Present:

Kristin Seaver, Chairman	<i>General Dynamics Information Technology</i>
Farad Ali, Co-Chairman	<i>Asociar, LLC</i>
Susan Lorenz-Fisher	<i>AmerisourceBergen Corp.</i>
Mamie Mallory	<i>Mallory & Associates, LLC</i>
Nigel Stephens	<i>U.S. Black Chambers of Commerce</i>
David Waggoner	<i>Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries</i>
Dr. Kimberly Wise White	<i>American Chemistry Council</i>

Absent: Denise Bailey, Gail Bassette, Deryl McKissack, Stacy Smedley, Keith Tillage

Guest Speakers & Presenters:

Jarah Meador	<i>Director, Open Innovation Programs, GSA</i>
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GSA Staff Present:

Boris Arratia	<i>Designated Federal Officer</i>
Stephanie Hardison	<i>Deputy Designated Federal Officer</i>
David Cochinnec	<i>GAP FAC Support</i>
Skylar Holloway	<i>GAP FAC Support</i>
Annabelle Thompson	<i>Closed Captioner</i>
Daniel Swartz	<i>ASL Interpreter</i>
Steve Babb	<i>ASL Interpreter</i>

CALL TO ORDER

Boris Arratia, Designated Federal Officer, opened the public meeting by welcoming the group before reminding the public that there will be time for comments and statements at the end of the meeting. Any written comments can be submitted through regulations.gov. Roll call was performed before the meeting was turned over to Chairperson Kristin Seaver.

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Chairperson Kristin Seaver welcomed the subcommittee and reiterated the informal feedback received from GSA. The subcommittee will be taking a step forward to refine recommendations as well as creating goals and challenges for the group to come up with.

GUEST SPEAKER (Challenge.gov)

Jarah Meador will be giving an overview on Challenge.gov and the Federal government's use of prize competition to promote innovation.

The government has been using prize competition for many centuries to source innovation, especially when the solution can't be found within the walls of the government. In 2010 every federal agency received the authority to run prize competitions. In 2017, it was amended and challenge.gov was named as the platform to use when announcing a prize competition and GSA received a role in supporting the use and diffusion of crowdsourcing with prize competitions across the government.

Challenge.gov is a program that lives within GSA's Technology Transformation Services (TTS). The mission of TTS is to deliver a digital government by and for the American people. Challenge.gov serves as a bridge that allows federal agencies to engage directly with the public to solve prize competitions. There are consultative services provided for a handful of agencies who are seeking to use prize competitions to solve a problem. The federal wide community of practice is also supported. There are about 800 federal employees that are open innovation practitioners or are interested in the methodology. There are bi-weekly office hours, toolkits, webinars, etc., to bring people together to talk about their work. The platform is free for anyone to use across the government to post and publish their prize competition.

Federal agencies use prize competitions to accomplish a variety of goals. It can range from analytics, entrepreneurship, ideas, design, scientific, software, and technology. The most recent competition was related to artificial intelligence (AI) and healthcare

systems. The reason these are being run is to bring new leading-edge companies that don't work with the government. They want to see new concepts out there and introduce these companies to federal agencies. 80% of the companies that win the prize competition have never dealt with the government.

The benefits of prize competitions to the federal government and innovators are valuable.

Benefits to federal government:

- Partnerships
- Attract leading edge innovators.
- Brings out of discipline perspectives to bear.
- Pay only for success.
- Can be an onramp to follow on direct activities.

The benefits to innovators:

- Selection not based on past performance.
- No-strings attached funding.
- Intellectual property remains with the innovator.
- Opportunities for follow-on funding.

Boris Arratia followed up with a case on challenge.gov to showcase the subcommittee as an example on the process, capabilities and value of challenge.gov.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Nigel Stephens – How do we leverage what other agencies (EPA, DOE, etc.) are already doing and how do we get into their networks? What are the mechanisms around how to do that? How would this tool be able to reach through their network since they are reaching people that we can't necessarily reach at GSA.

A: Jarah Meador – The platform doesn't allow you to go out across the government and identify opportunities for partnership. That is a manual process, but we can identify the right points of contact to convene a working group around a variety of topics.

Q: Nigel Stephens – Could we make a recommendation to GSA to address the gap that this program doesn't have the ability to partner with other agencies? Or is this program separate from GSA?

A: Boris Arratia – That is something worth exploring, because part of that is how to make things easier and GSA plays a big role in that.

Q: Farad Ali – Is there any way in the awards that we could identify the size and diversity of the companies to ensure we are being inclusive in the process?

A: Jarah Meador – Agencies have used prize competitions to structure the eligibility. There's a current competition where only companies in the Pacific Northwest are eligible to participate, so yes you can limit eligibility based on your requirements. One thing to consider is how to verify those companies. We suggest only verifying those you have selected for the award.

Q: Kimberly Wise White – Was there specific communication channels that were used to bring in the new applicants and winners that hadn't worked with the government before? How long does it generally take for the initiation of the competition to announce the winners?

A: Jarah Meador – There is no typical timeline. It depends on the complexity of the competition.

A: Boris Arratia – We used multiple subject matter areas to bring in different teams. Each team had different folks from agencies that had networks. We worked with those teams to get the word out about the competition, so we used the GSA Office of Strategic Communications to get the word out. We received the most interest working through subject matter experts who expanded this through their networks well beyond what we could do at GSA.

Jarah mentioned another avenue to explore is a crowdsourcing campaign that isn't a competition. It's called Reach You where they've identified through their data that 10% of participants in competitions have an ".edu" address. This means they are only reaching 10% of academics in their process. Through this campaign they are asking academia to tell them how they can be reached along with the streams and databases that are important to them.

RECOMMENDATION 1 DISCUSSION (Innovative New Entrants)

The group opened up the Jamboard to brainstorm potential challenges that GSA could sponsor/champion to attract and onboard innovative new entrants. The subcommittee came up with the following:

- Collect proposals for recycle/reusable options for battery components (e.g. reusing EV charging station and car batteries)
- Expanding GSA's excess property usage.

- Collect proposals for domestic producers of plant-based biodegradable materials for consumer products purchased through all “facilities” contracts.
- Innovate EV solutions.
- Innovate air quality solutions.
- Loved the idea of an accelerator-based challenge – targeting the incubators who sponsor small tech companies.
- Inventory, consolidate, and reduce the “on the grid” electric use of Federal data centers.
- Ideas on disposing of obsolete items (i.e. batteries, etc.)
- Target specific communities (i.e. HBCUs, etc.)
- Sustainable textiles – driving a circular economy.
- Utilizing commercial and university research on plant-based biodegradable to source disposable commercial products used by federal facilities.
- Ideas on how GSA could attract innovative new entrants with sustainable products and services.
- Mandatory sourcing groups – how to tap into for innovation or link with innovative new entrants.

If there are speakers relevant to these ideas, the group is encouraged to share.

RECOMMENDATION 2 DISCUSSION (Maturity Model)

The group is looking to source folks who could talk to the subcommittee based on GSA’s recommendation on the maturity model and their experience. Based on their conversations with these folks, they will be able to find the key outcomes of the maturity models along with the appropriate levels. The subcommittee will also be able to break down their group and move forward on refining this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 3 DISCUSSION (Lighthouse)

The group moved on to their third recommendation of how to create industry exchange and connect suppliers through networking groups. The group came up with the following:

- Leveraging existing networks as much as possible.
- Categorizing networks to help paint the ecosystem.
- Could a challenge help amplify the lighthouse idea?

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kristin Seaver opened the floor up for public comments, however there were none.

CLOSING REMARKS

Kristin Seaver concluded the discussion for the public meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Boris Arratia adjourned the meeting.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

DocuSigned by:



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Kristin Seaver

Chairperson

GAP FAC Industry Partnerships Subcommittee

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Farad Ali

Co-Chairperson

GAP FAC Industry Partnerships Subcommittee