



## Option Process to Ensure iNtegrity -- OPEN Contractor FAQ's

**1. *What does it mean if I receive an automated email from GSA stating that my contract will not be considered for an option?***

As of September 24, 2011, Contracting Officers (COs) are now receiving automated notifications that contracts are expiring 250 days prior to expiration. The CO will make a determination of whether exercising an option on a specific contract is in the best interest of the government. If the CO determines that a contract clearly does not meet specified contractual terms and conditions, they may choose to exclude the contract from the option review process. This decision triggers an automated email to the Contractor (see email 1 which you can access from the Vendor Support Center (VSC)) explaining the reason why the contract is not being considered for an option. If the Contractor feels that this decision is incorrect, they may contact the CO as soon as possible to discuss this decision.

**2. *What happens if I do not want to renew my Federal Supply Schedule contract through the next option period?***

The authorized negotiator on your contract will receive an automated letter from your CO; approximately 210 days prior to your contract expiration date (see email 2 which you can access from the VSC). This letter provides you a choice to either be considered for an option or decline the invitation. If you decide to decline, the authorized negotiator, with a digital certificate must respond within 45 days of receipt and state your decision why you do not want to be considered. All correspondence must be initiated through the eMod system which requires a digital certificate. Please note it is very important for the contractor to keep their authorized negotiator and the digital certificate current in order to process any contract action.

**3. *What does the new option letter request from the Contractor in order for them to be considered for an option and what am I required to submit?***

The authorized negotiator on your contract will receive an automated letter from your CO, approximately 210 days prior to your contract expiring (see email 2 which you can access from the VSC). This letter provides you a choice to either be considered for an option or decline the invitation. If you wish to be considered, an authorized negotiator for your company must either affirm that there have been no changes to:

- Your commercial sales practices (i.e. CSP-1 chart),
- Price reduction clause discount relationship, and
- Terms and Conditions.

Or, provide updated documentation on any of the above factors that have changed including an updated commercial pricelist. All contractors must also provide an updated business size redetermination and an updated subcontracting plan, if applicable.

**4. Does the response to the option letter have to be 'signed' by an officer of the company or just an authorized negotiator?**

Your response to the option letter must be uploaded through the eMod system by a person who is an authorized negotiator and can contractually commit the company. This person must be the authorized negotiator and have a digital certificate in order to upload these materials.

**5. What happens if I cannot complete my option letter by the deadline stated in the letter?**

If you believe that you will not be able to meet the deadline stated in the option letter; you should contact your Contracting Officer (CO) ASAP and agree on another due date. If you do not respond to the CO by the deadline, you are putting your contract in for possible cancellation or expiration

**6. Will I need a digital certificate?**

Yes! All modifications are now completed through the eMod system which requires a valid digital certificate. Please note, the name on your digital certificate must EXACTLY match the name in the contract file. Without a valid digital certificate, you will not be able to gain access to the system.

**7. Where can I get a digital certificate?**

Obtaining a digital certificate is a simple process and is now mandatory for all GSA schedule contracts. To obtain the digital certificate, go to the eoffer website: <https://eoffer.gsa.gov/>, click on "digital certificates" and follow the instructions. Please note, that the name on your digital certificate must EXACTLY match the name on the contract file otherwise you will not be able to gain access to the system. Currently the lead-time on getting digital certificates is 7-14 calendar days.

**8. Whom do I contact if I have a question about the eMod system or I have a digital certificate, but eMod will not let me in?**

If you are experiencing technical problems with the eMod system call 1-866-472-9114 or email [eoffer@gsa.gov](mailto:eoffer@gsa.gov). If you are able to provide a screen shot of your digital certificate or the screen where you are encountering a problem, this will assist the helpdesk in identification of your problem

**9. What materials do I need to provide at option time?**

If you wish to be considered for an option, an authorized negotiator for your company must either affirm that there have been no changes to:

- Your commercial sales practices (CSP-1),
- Price reduction clause discount relationship, and
- Terms and Conditions.

Or, provide updated documentation on any of the above factors that have changed including an updated commercial pricelist. All contractors must also provide an updated business size redetermination and an updated subcontracting plan (if applicable). For a copy of the option letter see attachment two.

**10. What materials do I no longer need to provide at option time?**

The Contractor will no longer be required to provide the Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR), Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), Commercial Sales Practice (CSP) (unless there have been changes to the current disclosed CSP), GSA price list, letter(s) of supply, wage determination(s) and commercial price list (unless there have been changes to the current disclosed CSP-1).

**11. How will an audit affect my option?**

The audit will take place in parallel with the review of your option. However, if the audit is not completed in time to exercise the option your CO has the discretion to award a temporary extension.

**12. What other contract maintenance activities can I expect at option time?**

It has become common practices and problematic for both the Government and the Contractor to conduct contract maintenance at the option time. However, contract maintenance should occur throughout the contract period. In order to facilitate this behavior change, the option modification is a unilateral modification only (FAR 43.103(b)). The CO still has the latitude to conduct contract maintenance though out the contract period but these actions are a bilateral modification (FAR 43.103(a)) and should be addressed in a timely fashion.

**13. What happens if my contract is expiring and I have not heard anything from GSA FAS?**

The most common error is the Contractors are not maintaining their contract file with the current authorized negotiator and a valid digital certificate. Confirm this information is current and then contact their Contracting Specialist (CS) or CO as soon as possible. It is the vendor's responsibility to maintain accurate contact information in their contract file.

**14. Who initiates and signs the option modification?**

The CO has the sole authority to initiate and sign the option modification.

**15. How will my past performance be assessed?**

There are many ways for a CO to assess past performance. These may include, but are not limited to: CCR, ORCA, Excluded Parties Lists System (EPLS), Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS), The Subcontracting Plan, 72A sales, ACO reports, Contractor Assisted Visit (CAV) reports, Contractor report cards and the completed option letter.

**16. I received an email from my CO asking for clarifications or additional information. By when must I respond?**

If you receive a request for clarifications or additional information, the letter will contain a due date (usually 10 calendar days). If a Contractor knows they can't meet the due date, they should contact their CS or CO and agree on a new due date ASAP.

**17. How important is it for me to keep up to date with my mass Mods?**

The CO is required to acknowledge that the Contractor does not have any outstanding mass modification(s) as a requirement for exercising the option. Mass mods typically deal with changes to contract clauses, and are frequently associated with schedule refreshes. If the CO finds there are outstanding mass modification(s) they cannot proceed with the evaluation of the option.

**18. What happens if I do not keep the points of contact for the contract up to date in the contract file?**

This is a bad business practice for contractors because the federal government is placing a greater reliance on electronic contracting. This will place your contract at risk because you will not receive important information such as; option letter, task order(s) or deliver order(s) and other notifications. You will also not be able to modify your contract with new product(s) or service(s).

**19. What happens if I cannot provide a full response or provide no response to the option letter?**

If the contractor does not provide a full response or no response, the CO will not be able to evaluate the option. Your contract may be cancelled or it will expire. It is strongly suggested to contact your CS or CO to discuss and document the reason(s) ASAP.

**20. What affect does a Subcontracting plan have on my option?**

Only other than small business (e.g. Large businesses) are required to provide a Subcontracting plan. This is another evaluation factor a CO must acknowledge that is current and that all required reports have been submitted.

**21. How will I find out whether the CO has exercised an option on my contract?**

The Contractor will be notified of the CO's decision via the eMod system with a notification of either a no award letter or the modification exercising the option.

**22. What is the goal deadline for exercising options?**

The FAS Commissioner has established a timeliness goal to have options exercised 60 calendar days prior to expiration of your contract.

**23. What do I do if I have additional questions not answered here? Or, if need more information about the new option process?**

Reach out to your CS or CO for advice. Additional resources are available at the following web sites: <http://eoffer.gsa.gov/>, <https://vsc.gsa.gov/>, <http://gsa.gov/portal/category/100000>

**24. Where can I provide feedback about the option process?**

Send an email to [masopen@gsa.gov](mailto:masopen@gsa.gov) and provide any comments or express any concerns. . If you experience any technical problems with the eMod system call 1-866-472-9114 or email [eoffer@gsa.gov](mailto:eoffer@gsa.gov) .