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>> And we had over 100 government members on our government day on Tuesday. This is a testament to the high interest of customers and industry partners waiting on this vehicle to be launched. My name is Charles Wingate. I'm a senior acquisition strategist with ITC, and the former director and contracting officer for the project when it started. Today I'm filling in for Faith Shelton, the Current Senior Contracting Officer who is out for personal reason. Next slide, please. I'll start with some ground rules. Today GSA intends to share information with industry and get feedback on how to tailor the Ascend Acquisition to fit the needs of the customers. Since we're in the market research phase, this exchange of information does not constitute a solicitation or a request for quote and is not to be construed as a commitment. We're opening the lanes of communication to better understand agency needs and gather feedback from industry as well. Instead of calling our office, we ask that you direct all inquiries to our mailbox, cloudenterprisewide@gsa.gov. You can view the draft PWS on sam.gov and eBuy. The acquisition and technical staff are monitoring your group email account. It is possible that we may not respond directly to your recommendations, the questions, but they will be taken under consideration. Any information submitted by respondents during this exchange is strictly voluntary. It will not be shared since we're still in the market research stage. Information presented today can change through the various updates up to the final version of the formal RFQ. And if necessary, amendments will be issued to change requirements as the need -- as needed during the formal RFQ phase. Next slide.

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For our administrative overview, I would like to highlight that this briefing will only cover these areas under the Ascend BPA. The acquisition strategy and approach and the requirements for

baseline, Pool 1 and Pool 1 Sub-Pools by our technical team. Evaluation factors will not be descript. Please mute all phones during the presentation to prevent any background noises during the presentation. Your input and feedback is greatly appreciated. We encourage comments and feedbacks. Use the Q&A form posted on sam.gov. Our government partners are sending in their comments and feedbacks as well. GSA will post a presentation on GSA Interact under the Cloud and Software Community in approximately 12 business days. Please consider joining the Interact Community if you have not already. Next slide.

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At this time, I will do a few introductions. Ms. Laura Stanton, GSA Assistant Commissioner for the Information Technology Category. She will be providing opening remarks after the introductions. As I stated earlier, I'm filling in for Faith Shelton, the Lead Contracting Officer. She's supported by two members, two other members of the contracting staff: Katherine Bradley, a Contracting Officer, and Elizabeth Trimble, a Contract Specialist, which are not pictured. Next slide.

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The two technical requirements subject matter experts briefing today are: Barry Hodge, Chief Cloud/Solution Development Branch Information Technology Category, and Jonathan Plante, Senior Cloud Strategist, ITC Products Information Technology Category. Now, Ms. Stanton will give us open remarks. Laura, please.

>> Thank you very much, Charles, and good morning and thank you to everyone who is joining us here today. I am thrilled to be announcing the launch of the Ascend vehicle and to be able to gather your feedback. We know that it's been a long road to get here, but we also know that

done right, Ascend will deliver many benefits and move our customer agencies forward in both cloud and the emerging technology spaces. And Ascend isn't agile and innovative vehicle and we rely on your input and feedback and could not have gotten where we are today without the feedback that you've given us to date. And so we encourage you to continue to do that.

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We've worked closely with you to determine the best mix of requirements that's going to get us a good acquisition vehicle for the customer agencies while learning from you and adopting your valuable feedback. What we're working to do here is to expand on the government successful approach of standardization that we've done in the telecommunications category and transfer that standardization to Cloud and other emerging technologies. That's what we're looking to accomplish with Ascend. And in order to create that standardization, we need to be able to consolidate these efforts into a single vehicle for the efficiency of procurement and the consistency of administration across all layers, for GSA, customers, and our suppliers. And Ascend is our avenue to meet that goal. And we also need to be able to segment our approach based on the unique characteristics of each level. Infrastructure, platform, and software layers of the stack. And that's exactly why we've developed the pool structure the way we are. This, we recognize that this is uncharted territory, but we also know that innovation, responsiveness, and agility, and adopting new approaches is something that is also second nature to GSA. Forward progress is taking time, careful consideration, numerous discussions, and countless hours of hard work from a dedicated team across GSA and the IT Category. Taking this from a kernel of an idea, the idea that we need a government-wide cloud solution that allows secure, efficient, and adaptability to where we are today is a long journey. And now we're beginning to see the results of that with the Draft PWS. Again, we could not have achieved this effort without you and we want to continue to learn from your best practices and your knowledge. We're fully

committed to continuing this momentum and this will continue to be a collective effort. Our listening and engagement doesn't stop today with Pool 1. You have our ears and you heard a number of ways from Charles on how you can continue to engage with us through Interact and through being able to give us feedback on the drafts that we have out already. We're going to -- we commit to continue to engage you and our customer agencies, which is why we already held the industry day for Ascend to continue to make this a success. So thank you for the honest feedback that you've given and please keep it coming. We see this as really an opportunity to support the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial agencies. And we need your participation and engagement to do that. So let's continue to shape Ascend together and I'll turn it over to today's presenters. Thank you so much Charles and have a great Industry Day.

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>> Thank you, Laura, for the great overview of our Ascend BPA progress, the hard work that has gone into the development of these requirements, and the goals of the projects. This is just one example of how GSA's leadership is supporting this endeavor. Our purpose for today is to review this Ascend BPA Request For Information, RFI, released on December 19th. Our objective is to continue the collaboration and engagement with our industry partners and we are going to continue to echo throughout this, okay? We've reserved three hours for this event, but we don't want this to be the last time that you communicate with us on the formation of the Ascend BPAs. Thank you for your valuable time, participation, and input thus far in shaping the Ascend BPA. We have a lot of information to share with you. The slides will be shared, but we recommend you taking notes. Here are the five main areas that we'll be covering today. Acquisition overview, requirements overview, and we're really excited to bring Ascend BPA to the market. It will be -- t will make cloud buying easier for our customers while incorporating improved security, best practices, and lessons learned that we've collected throughout the

market research and various interactions with customers acquiring cloud and cloud-related IT professional services. We're working closely with our stakeholders to come up with the best mix of requirements that will get us to a great set of multiple award BPAs. That also means meeting our customer needs.

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Preparing for the Ascend BPA solicitation. This is just a general reminder to take this time to get your GSA contract and Cloud SIN up to date and preparing for the quoting on the upcoming RFQ. Future engagements. And next steps, Barry and I will share information to assist you for the road ahead. At the end of the presentation, we'll be sharing with our industry partners on information about the FASt Lane process. So submitting documents for a GSA schedule for the first time vendors are starting the process for a continuous, formerly known as a dual contract, to cover the entire period of performance of the BPA or information on how to add the Cloud SIN and other offerings via the FASt Lane modification process. We'll not have an open dialogue in Q&A session, but we do encourage you to submit your questions and comments in the chat box in the Q&A form on sam.gov so that we can share the information with the staff for consideration. Next slide.

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Let me go over a few key terms that pertain to the Ascend BPA program. Some are common, but we want to be -- we want to include them just to put everybody on the same page. Their Federal Supply Schedule, commonly referred to as FSS, they provide authorized federal, state, local, and tribal agencies with a simplified process of acquiring commercial supplies and commercial services in varying quantities while obtaining volume discounts. One time saving feature of the Federal Supply Schedule is that it eliminates the needs to synopsize requirements

by the ordering activity. We have buyers that are authorized. The federal, state, local travel, and government entities, and sellers, and pre-vetted contractors that have met the evaluation criteria at the schedule level. GSA Multiple Award Schedule, commonly known as MAS. The name of the GSA directed and managed Federal Supply Schedule. Blanket Purchase Agreement. This acquisition will result in the establishment of a Multiple Award BPA. It is not a contract. The Blanket Purchase Agreement is a simplified method for filling anticipated repetitive needs. One of the goals of the Ascend BPA is to streamline ordering procedures for quicker turnarounds, including those with standard terms and conditions for the government community. BPAs allow for specific customer requirements that are not fitting for and may be an impediment to assist the Federal Supply Schedule. For example, FedRAMP, NIST Standards, or security levels. The Task Order. The ordering activity will issue funded orders for their cloud requirements at the competition at the BPA level. Next slide.

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Next slide. I'm going to turn it over to Barry and he's going to address the question why Ascend. Barry, the floor is yours.

>> All right. Thank you, Charles, for the introduction. And thank you to Laura for her intro and continued support. And thank you to all of you for attendance today to give us your ear and feedback on the Ascend BPA. Charles asked the question, so why Ascend. And said I'd cover it. I'll provide an overview of why Ascend came to be and what goals we seek to achieve. I'll cover it here at a high level. and as we go into later sessions of the presentation, I encourage you to harken back to them as the main drivers for why we are taking the approach that we'll lay out. But before I get into the presentation, I would like to start with some reflection to set the stage, so to speak. When we look back, there's been many transformative advancements in IT over

the last two decades and a half that I've been working in IT. I personally started my federal

career just a year or two before directory services started taking hold. And working with the

team composed of very motivated federal staff and expert contract staff. We designed, tested,

and deployed one of the largest active directory solutions in the world at the time. You fast

forward to today and a directory service solution is the cornerstone of enterprise IT

infrastructure. Likewise, there was a time in the early 2000 when security was an afterthought,

and you usually had a single security officer or at most, a very small team come in near the Go-

Live Date to make sure security checklists resulted in green check marks down the right column.

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Again, fast forward to today, there's an entirely new classification within IT, focused entirely on

ensuring security is baked in from the planning phase all the way through to operations. And

then to the decommissioning of a service. To further stress this point, cybersecurity specialists

are in such high demand now that the federal government has been driven to offer salary,

incentives, and retention pay just to stay competitive in the talent and recruitment gain. There's

many more examples, but those two are enough to set the context for where we are in the cloud

journey. While some organizations are relatively new to cloud, many of us have moved into an

optimization mindset similar to the two examples that I just mentioned. Collectively, we've lived

through the initial hurried adoptions, driven by cloud first or rife with mid steps or missteps in

omissions that only our hindsight and experience have brought into full view. In various forum,

I've heard the question asked of seasoned panelists, what would you do different if you were

starting your cloud journey today and had the benefit of your current hindsight? While those

responses naturally varied, now they always included some paraphrase of, I would start with

and spend more time planning and establishing governance. So here we are today., we've

collected lessons learned and we've developed best practices from our initial cloud journeys.

We've had many examples demonstrating the required partnership between government and industry and how that partnership changes over time as the government insources talent that can only be obtained through that relationship during early adoption. Cloud has matured in the same way the prior examples have, and we've got an opportunity institutionalize the next generation of cloud acquisitions. So I ask the question again, why Ascend? We need secure and compliant cloud solutions. Ascend is based on comprehensive cybersecurity and compliance requirements to cover all layers of the CloudStack, as Laura mentioned previously, as well as professional services needed to support them.

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We've taken the lessons learned from the past and we actively monitor current and evolving guidance from authoritative sources. And we've designed Ascend to accommodate future requirements that none of us have even thought about yet. As we work through the detailed development of the same requirements and leveraging some of that hindsight that we've gained from countless customer engagements and past experience, we realize that certain requirements can only be satisfied and enforced by the direct providers of cloud services. We've developed the structure to effectively apply requirements to those directly responsible for enforcing security at the layer in question. We need competition. Ascend leverages GSA's MAS Cloud SIN 5182110C to make your services visible and available to GSA customers. We inherit your catalogs, past performance information, and extensive terms and conditions that have a proven track record under the MAS program. Also, Ascend facilitates the customer navigation of the 600 plus Cloud SIN vendors by categorizing services further for easier identification and use, making your services more visible to the customers that need them. And finally, Ascend levels of playing field for smaller vendors attempting to increase business in the highly competitive CSP market. Laura already mentioned standardization. Ascend looks for current

and future opportunities to standardize buyer and seller interactions from acquisition planning

and execution through the operations and for transition at the end of the procurement lifecycle.

You've heard the word agility already and you'll continue to hear it throughout our session today.

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And we all know technology changes at a mind bending pace naturally, so do the guidance and

compliance measures related to it. Whether it's emerging technology, new players in the market,

new NIST guidance, new executive orders, new best practices are developed by the various

communities of practice across the ecosystem. These are all things that require us to be agile. I

refer back to an example. Two years ago, AI was mentioned very little in day-to-day

conversations. Now dominates news headlines and the subject matter discussed on various

industry newsletters and forms. Buyers concerned with how to adopt the technology safely are

scrambling to get guidance in place while new AI capabilities are being integrated into existing

solutions and offered for use. Ascend is intended to provide the ability for us to evolve at a pace

that is more aligned with the pace of technology adoption. Reducing duplication of effort. We

have many common requirements, whether federal, state, local, or tribal governments, or other

eligible GSA buyers engaged in the cloud procurement. Considerable work has gone into

aggregating those requirements to the BPA level with Ascend so that the work does not have to

be repeated each time a procurement action is taken. Jonathan is going to explain in much

more detail later in this session as he describes our requirement structure. Speed is something

we also have interest in. Ascend in visions and supports a simplified ordering process for

buyers. Buyers should be able to focus on specific requirements unique to their organizational

need rather than repeating the requirements that would otherwise need to be included. You as

vendors awarded on the Ascend, BPA should benefit from this as well as general requirements

are inherited on task orders and only need to be ingrained into your process once. Orders will

be aligned with the BPA and task orders be narrow to specific and unique requirements. And we've got common drivers. We've heard from many customers in the last couple of years and we've summarized the common drivers and need into this procurement vehicle. We've heard the need for governance, best practices in cybersecurity. We've heard the need for standardized catalogs. We've heard the need for broader usage and spend visibility. And we know we need clearer roles and responsibilities within this area.

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So I'm going to go over a little bit of an overview here. Fully implemented, Ascend follows the scope of the MAS Cloud SIN, again, 518210C. It includes all the cloud services infrastructure as a service, platform as a service, and software as a service. And as I mentioned before, the cloud related IT professional services commonly used. As we mentioned a few times today's presentation and the current RFI, PWS is focusing on Pool 1, but we're going to provide a full overview here to demonstrate alignment with the goals we've spoken of thus far. The Ascend pool structure is logically constructed, as I mentioned before, to categorize the MAS SIN scope further to make identifications of those solutions for the cloud buyer easier and the identification of potential bidding opportunities easier for you all as sellers of cloud solutions. So Pool 1 is INP. And we put these together because they're commonly provided from the same cloud instance and often share similar pricing models based on consumption or utilization metrics. Pool 2 is our software as a service. And SaaS is built upon existing IaaS and PaaS cloud providers offerings, but they often share their very different characteristics from INP. In terms of price and model, SaaS is often firm or subscription based and the support requirements for the provider extend to the application layer, leaving less configuration and operational load on the buyers of the solutions. And Pool 3 is the labor to support cloud planning, architecture, and operations. So at this point, I will turn it back over to Charles to talk a little bit about socioeconomics before we

move on to the next slide. Charles.

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>> Thank you, Barry. In regards to socioeconomic and support of the agency's/buyer's effort to meet socioeconomic initiative, large businesses seeking consideration for this contract must demonstrate a proactive effort to achieve some contracting goals. Small business that meet the requirement will also be considered for awards. Just to let you know the importance of this, we are working with our Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business, OSDBU, to assist us in crafting strategies that will encourage large businesses to meet or exceed social economic goals and initiatives that will allow participation or small businesses in this market space to the maximum extent possible. Next slide. Barry, turn it back over to you, sir, to discuss the three pillars approach.

>> All right. Thank you, Charles. So Charles mentioned we base Ascend on three pillars. And these three pillars tie back to the goals and objectives we've discussed to this point. For requirements, we've defined actions, results in context that describe the expected outcomes for each requirement. We've categorized requirements into a standard structure and it is reflected throughout the full body of the PWS. Jonathan is going to provide much more detail on that structure. So I'll save any discussion on that for our next session. I mentioned the importance of governance and the fact that it's been a recurring theme as we've engaged with customers. We've incorporated a vast list of legislative regulatory policy and standards-based requirements with extensive references throughout the PWS mapping those requirements back to their authoritative origin. And then the third pillar, we've defined the various stakeholders across the cloud landscape and identified the roles and responsibilities associated with each. This three-pillar concept will be reflected as we go out through the remainder of today's presentation.

>> Thank you, Barry.

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Just for a high level, look at some of the next steps. We issued a draft PWS for Pool 1 on

December the 19th. If you have not seen the draft, please visit sam.gov and search for Ascend

to issue an office GSA and provide your comments on the Q&A form posted with the file.

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We held government day on Tuesday and we're sharing information with industry today so that

we can continue to shape the Ascend Acquisition with input from government and industry. We

will continue engagement with agencies and industry as we move through the various stages of

the project. Solicitation phase, award phase, and post-award of the project. We're developing

Ascend based on the feedback that we received from government and industry. We're

requesting all comments back on February 24th. The Ascend BPA integrated project team will

consolidate all of the comments and make decisions as to what to include in the BPA. So far

during our market research phase, we found the common cloud requirements exist across

government and the agencies need a better approach and more up to front help on heavy lifting

associated with cloud acquisitions. We plan on putting those common requirements into the

Ascend BPA. GSA is going to review, analyze, and incorporate all this into the BPA. We're

starting to do our market research on Pools 2 and 3 and we expect to issue an RFI for those

pools in the summer. So please keep checking on sam.gov, eBuy, and Interact for update. And

that's the market research for Pools 2 and 3. For Pool 1, the solicitation, formal solicitation,

that's going to be issued later on in the summer timeframe as well. The period of performance

on the Pool 1 solicitation, the period of performance will consist of three-year base period,

three-year option period, and two, 1-year options for a total of eight years from the date of

award. If our Clause 5216-22 commit quantity, which is included in the Multiple Award Schedule Solicitation, flows down to the BPA. Will allow free activities and BPA awardings to continue orders up to 60 months after the basis in BPAs have expired. Next slide.

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>> Charles, this is Jeremy. I want to interrupt you real quick. Maybe something is covering your microphone or something. You're fading out pretty considerably.

>> All right. I will see. I will try to move straight. Jeremy, I thank you for that feedback because we want to make sure everybody gets this.

>> There you go. Much better. Thank you, sir.

>> Okay. Next slide. Number of awards. At the present time, a preset number of awards have not been determined. All qualifying vendors will be eligible and rated against the evaluation criteria, which is still in the works. Here are the types of task orders that will be allowed against the BPA. We are developing an ordering guide to assist agencies with the ordering. Of course, we're going to have firm fixed price, labor hour, time and material. And also we're including the GSAM Clause 552 -- excuse me. 552.2.238-199. The title, Special Ordering Procedures Applicable When Procuring Cloud Computing On a Consumption Basis. This clause is already inserted into the contract of all MAS Cloud SIN 51820C vendors with the acceptance of the June, 2022 MAS modification to the GSA Schedule. The clause specifies among other things that the ordering activity may allow funds incrementally as the bonafide need arises for predefined and established fixed price procurement requirements on individual cleanse. The vendor must provide specific tools to allow the government to track incurred costs, to help track the agency fund's burn rate. This only applies to the GSA Schedule Cloud SIN 518210C. Currently, the only government worldwide cloud specific regulatory cover for buying cloud on a consumption basis. The ordering guide may be found on the cloud information center website,

cic.gsa.gov. In regards to the agile acquisition strategy, we're using the agile acquisition strategy, as Barry mentioned, in previous points. This will allow us to evolve over time as technology and requirements change. In the next slide, we will discuss how we plan to incorporate an agile strategy within Ascend.

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We need to be able to respond to and incorporate emerging technologies over the lifetime of the vehicle. With a period of performance of eight years, we can certainly expect new legislation, regulations, and policies to come to bear. Although technology changes rapidly, new requirements are also an evolving target. And GSA customers need the ability to address new critical requirements in their cloud procurements. For vendors, new entrance to the marketplace need an opportunity to participate and compete with all established players in the market. With the theme, we plan to accomplish this through the planned and well communicated addition of new requirements as they come to life. We'll have the ability to add new pools and new sub-pools as technology changes through modification. And we'll have on ramping procedures to allow new vendors to enter the marketplace to participate. We can accomplish this through our FASt Lane process and for any vendor that's not eligible on the initial award on ramping when they do become eligible. Thank you.

>> All right. We are going to resume. Welcome back, everyone. Appreciate you participating in the polls to this point. We are now ready to take a closer look at the Ascend requirements in this session. And it's my pleasure to introduce to you Mr. Jonathan Plante. Once again, Jonathan has been the primary architect of the Ascend Pool 1 PWS and he'll be going over the release draft as well as going through some concepts and language that we are in considering adding to the final package, but may not be in the current draft. So now I'll turn it over to Jonathan to dig

into the details.

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>> All right. Thank you, Barry. And again, thank you everyone for attending today. Extremely excited on our participation. So hopefully this is just as exciting on the requirements. So let me go ahead and we'll go ahead and we'll start. The draft Performance Work Statement identifies and refers to multiple personas. The personas include the administrative agency, which for the Ascend BPA is the General Services Administration and identifies actions and responsibilities generally for the administrative contracting officer. Authorized assessment and evaluation entities are explicitly identified government agencies that are authorized to conduct and perform independent cybersecurity assessments and evaluations of cloud service providers. They are agencies that have a cybersecurity mission in defending the federal government and the nation from cybersecurity attacks and threats. Government agencies include the Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, CISA, Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program, FedRAMP, and the National Security Agency, NSA. Department of Defense Elements include the Department of Defense Cloud Authorization Services, DCAS, DoD, Operational Test and Evaluation and US Cyber Command. Authorized vendors are vendors that have received at least one Ascend, BPA Sub-Pool award and are authorized under the Ascend BPA to provide the respective cloud services. For example, a vendor who has received an Ascend BPA award for only Pool 1 Sub-Pool 1-1 FedRAMP moderate DoD impact Level 2 would be an authorized vendor for only Pool 1, Sub-Pool 1-1 and not Pool 1, Sub-Pools 1-2 or 1-3. DCAS is the DoD element responsible for the issuance of DoD authorizations at the DoD impact levels of 2, 4, 5, and 6. Eligible users are the entities that are authorized to use the GSA Multiple Awards Schedule. GSA generically identifies eligible users as federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, but the list of eligible users is

significantly larger to include, for example, public schools and universities, the American Red Cross, and the United Nations. I refer you to GSA order 4800.2I, Eligibility to use GSA Sources of Supply and Services And the Associated GSA Website Eligibility Determinations for the Complete Listing of Eligible Users. FedRAMP is the government office responsible for the issuance of FedRAMP authorizations at the FedRAMP low, moderate, and high levels. Law enforcement is any entity that has the legal authorization and jurisdiction for the oversight and/or law enforcement for the administrative agency and/or eligible users. The draft Performance Work Statement requirements are organized into a hierarchical structure with each lower level inheriting the higher level requirements. This was done to support our overarching organization of requirements and to reduce the duplication of requirements. The baseline requirements apply universally to all pools, Pools 1, 2, and 3, and each of their respective sub-pools. The pool requirements are specific only to that pool and each of the pools, sub-pools. The sub-pool requirements are specific only to that sub-pool, but inherit all the higher level requirements, the pool requirements and baseline requirements. The requirements at the baseline pool and sub-pool levels are organized by the requirements framework to support the consistent categorization of requirements. In order to support today's presentation of the draft Performance Work Statement requirements, the requirements will be presented in sequence of the requirements framework with corresponding baseline pool and sub-pool requirements being presented at the same time.

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The review will start with the baseline pool and sub-pool acquisition requirements, followed by the baseline pool and sub-pool business requirements, followed in sequence for the data cybersecurity, environment and sustainability, operational, and finishing with the technical requirements. Not all the requirements will be reviewed today. The Ascend BPA team has

identified a subset of requirements to highlight during today's presentation. Attendees are asked to review the draft Performance Work Statement in detail and provide comments and questions using the sam.gov posted spreadsheet. The Ascend BPA team welcomes comments and questions on all the requirements. So please take this important opportunity to communicate with the Ascend BPA team on what you like and don't like where improvements can be made and what the Ascend may be missing in respect to requirements. Please do not hold back on your comments, recommendations, and criticisms of the Ascend BPA. The Ascend BPA team is holding today's event to ensure the requirements are clear and concise. Includes the appropriate governance and defines clear and delineated roles and responsibilities prior to the official solicitation. Note, the requirements and any list by default are organized in alphabetical order. Can I please have the next slide? The draft Performance Work Statement includes a few identifiers that the Ascend BPA team would like to review. The attachment identifier identifies that there are is a corresponding attachment to the requirement that should be reviewed. The Ascend BPA team has posted to attachments with the draft Performance Work Statement. They are the service catalog format and the invoice format. These formats have been defined to support standardization and consistent data collection. The deliverable identifier identifies that the requirement has a corresponding deliverable at the Ascend BPA or task order level. The placeholder identifier identifies two conditions. The Ascend BPA team is actively analyzing and reviewing requirements for the section and the Ascend BPA team is looking for comments and recommendations to assist in defining and finalizing the requirements. The reserved identifier identifies two possibilities. The section is reserved for future requirements that cannot be clearly and concisely identified today. Examples include post quantum cryptography and artificial intelligence machine learning, or this section is reserved for requirements to be identified at a task order level by eligible users. Can I please have the next slide?

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The Ascend BPA team would like to highlight these draft acquisition requirements. In order to ensure the accessibility of the cloud services to all users and to validate Section 508 compliance, authorized vendors will need to provide voluntary product accessibility templates for cloud service offerings as an Ascend BPA deliverable. The administrative agency will make the BPAC available to eligible users. The Ascend BPA team will be using section 508.gov, accessibility requirements tool to generate the final Ascend BPA 508 requirements. Authorized vendors' catalogs can be extensive and provide access to a multitude of cloud services. In order to ensure the end user only has access to cloud services that have been authorized at the task order level by the chief information officers and/or contracting officers, authorized vendors will be required to provide the ability for cloud services to be restricted to an authorized subset. The Ascend BPA does not explicitly define the method or implementation. The authorized vendor should make the capability as easy and as intuitive as possible. The Ascend BPA team is looking for comments and recommendations for transition in and transition out requirements to ensure the continuity of services when transitions occur between task orders. The Ascend BPA team is specifically looking for assistance in identifying key activities and timelines, best practices, and other requirements that support the successful transition of cloud services. The cloud services under Sub-Pools 1-1 1-2, and 1-3 must maintain an active and valid authorization from FedRAMP or DCAS to remain available under the Ascend BPA.

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Only The cloud services that fall within a FedRAMP or DCAS authorization can be included in the authorized vendor service catalogs. The Ascend BPA team is aware that some cloud service providers provide access to application marketplaces. The Ascend BPA team is looking for

comments and recommendations on if application marketplaces, offerings should be allowed. And if allowed, should the offerings also be limited only to those with a FedRAMP or DCAS authorization. The Ascend BPA team would like to highlight these draft business requirements. The Ascend BPA has established standardized formats and data elements for service catalogs and invoices. Please review the corresponding attachments that were posted along with the draft Performance Work Statement on sam.gov. These standardized deliverables will allow authorized vendors to reduce their catalog and invoice overhead and complexities by programming and processing singular formats, eligible entities to more efficiently review catalogs and invoices from multiple authorized vendors, eligible users, and the administrative agency to accurately, consistently, and timely collect data, supporting data to decisions. The administrative agency to obtain an office of management and budget best in class designation for the Ascend BPA. A best in class designation identifies an acquisition vehicle as a preferred government-wide solution. If authorized vendors provide access to an application marketplace, any cloud services procured through the application marketplace must be invoiced by the authorized vendor. This is required to ensure all expenditures are appropriately reported, reviewed, and paid. And reduces the possibility of financial irregularities. Cloud services awarded to another authorized vendor cannot be procured through another authorized vendor's application marketplace. This ensures the protection of cloud services awarded to authorized vendors and ensures the scope and requirements of cloud services awarded under sub-pools is maintained. Software licenses are also prohibited from being procured under the Ascend BPA and application marketplaces. The Ascend BPA team has developed the innovative concept of utilization based discounts. Utilization based discounts is a framework that would allow the government's procurement of cloud services to more closely align with how cloud services are procured in the commercial marketplace while remaining fully compliant with federal legislation,

regulations, and policies. Utilization based discounts would allow eligible users to more easily take advantage of commercial pricing mechanisms, such as volume discounts, promotional sales, price reductions, saving plans, et cetera. The Ascend BPA team aimed for a framework that is not administratively burdensome to both eligible users and authorized vendors, and allow eligible users to remain price competitive with the commercial marketplace when awarding three, five, or 10-year task orders. Can I please have the next slide.

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To assist with understanding utilization based discounts and how they work, let's review this example. An eligible user has awarded a task order with a base period CLIN 0001 and one option period CLIN 1001, for Server X, an infrastructure as a service offering. The awarded price for Server X is $20 per hour in both the base period and option period. Post task order award, the authorized vendor has reduced his commercial price for Server X to $10 per hour. Without utilization based discounts at the end of the base period, the contracting officer has to determine if it is still advantageous to execute the option period and continue to pay $20 per hour in the option period for Server X when the current commercial price is $10 per hour.

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The contracting officer has options. One, execute the option period and continue to pay $20 per hour. Or two, the contracting officer can recompete the requirement and seek price competition. If the contracting officer decides to recompete the requirement that initiates a new acquisition action and competitive award, meaning any competitive authorized vendor has the possibility of winning the recompete. With utilization based discounts, the authorized vendor could offer the contracting officer a utilization based discount of $150,000 in the option period calculated by multiplying 15,000 hours of Server X by the discount of $10. This would allow the contracting

officer to consider the utilization based discount in their advantageous analysis in deciding to execute the option period or recompete the requirement. In this example, the utilization based discount effectively reduces the price of Server X per hour in the option period to then $10 per hour, matching the authorized vendor's current commercial price. Everything else being equal, performance, et cetera, the contracting officer is highly likely to execute the option period. This eliminates the need to recompete the requirement early and allows the authorized vendor to continue providing services. Notice in the base period and option period, the awarded price remains unchanged. The authorized vendor continues to invoice for Server X at $20 per hour in the option period. The key is that Server X costs are invoiced against the utilization based discount value first. And only after the utilization based discount has been exhausted, will the authorized vendor begin invoicing against the $150,000 of newly obligated funding? Notice in the option period the total value of the CLIN is still $300,000, but the government only had to obligate $150,000 in new funding to get $300,000 in services. Can I please have the next slide?

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There are five critical elements to the concept and framework of utilization based discounts. One, the contracting officer retains full independence to determine if the execution of an optional period is still advantageous for the eligible user. The contracting officer can consider utilization based discounts as a factor in their determination. Are prices still fair, reasonable, and competitive? Two, utilization based discounts have no monetary value. Three, utilization based discounts must be based on the actual usage and consumption of cloud services. Utilization based discounts cannot be based on unused obligations nor used to prepay or prebuy cloud services in future option periods. All federal appropriation laws and regulations apply such as appropriations, period of availability. Can I please have the next slide?

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Four, awarded task order prices remain unchanged for the duration of the task order. There are no price renegotiations or price modifications after award. Five, utilization based discounts are always applied to the next option period. Continuing with the business requirements, the Pool 1 business requirements focus on the financial management of cloud services, ensuring eligible users have the appropriate capabilities and data available to financially plan and budget their cloud services along with the active financial management and monitoring of cloud services. These capabilities are especially important when eligible users are procuring cloud services on a consumption basis, such as when using requirements task orders. In order to support the eligible users' financial management of cloud services, authorized vendors will be required to provide a financial management and monitoring interface, commonly referred to as a financial dashboard. The financial management and monitoring interface is required to display a minimum set of defined data elements such as cloud services, unit of measure, quantity of cloud services consumed to date, budgeted value, cost to date, cost projections, et cetera.

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Display both real-time, financial information updated at least every 15 minutes and archive financial information updated at least every 24 hours. The Ascend BPA does not explicitly define the implementation nor format of the financial management and monitoring interface. Only that the required data elements are easily accessible to eligible users. Authorized vendors will be required to provide application programming interfaces, APIs, that will allow eligible users to access the same data elements and information available via the financial management and monitoring interface. The APIs will allow eligible users to use third party financial management solutions that provide advanced capabilities such as aggregating financial data from multiple

cloud environments. Currently the business requirements at the Pool 1, Sub-Pool level are marked reserved. Could I please have the next slide?

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The Ascend BPA team would like to highlight these draft cybersecurity requirements. Cybersecurity is one of the most important objectives of the Ascend BPA. The Ascend BPA wants to provide eligible users access to cloud services and we want to ensure authorized vendors are collaborating, coordinating, participating, and reporting with the appropriate federal government agencies to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of cloud services. FedRAMP and DCAS evaluate and issue authorizations for cloud services. However, eligible users will also be provided government furnished information to authorize vendors. Eligible users need to ensure that the government furnished information remains confidential and secure. Therefore, the Ascend BPA team is reviewing requirements for authorized vendors to provide the result of an annual cybersecurity assessment. The annual cybersecurity assessments are conducted by third party cybersecurity assessors to ensure the authorized vendors, non-cloud services, corporate information systems are secure and have implemented standard cybersecurity policies and practices.

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If an authorized vendor provides access to an application marketplace, the Ascend BPA will require the authorized vendor to deliver an application marketplace cybersecurity disclosure. This will be an Ascend BPA level deliverable and the administrative agency will make it available to eligible users. The disclosure will require authorized vendors to describe the authorized vendor's responsibilities in providing, maintaining, and operating the marketplace. Disclosures,

guarantees, and warranties. Terms and conditions. Practices for protecting and securing the marketplace, practices used to identify, authenticate, and authorize the marketplace vendors. Practices used to authenticate and validate the services. Practices for remediating and reporting cybersecurity vulnerabilities and incidents. Practices removing vulnerable marketplace services and notifying eligible users. Practices for removing vendors from the marketplace, including notifying eligible users. Eligible users, chief information officers. And chief information security officers will use the disclosure to determine if and to what extent they use application marketplaces. Authorized vendors will be required to allow and work with authorized assessment and evaluation entities such as DHS-CISA and US Cyber Command to conduct cybersecurity and operational assessments of authorized vendors cloud services. These assessments are meant to be collaborative engagements between authorized assessment and evaluation entities and authorized vendors with a focus being on maximizing the security of cloud services.

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Authorized vendors will be required to report cybersecurity incidents to DHS-CISA and DICISE. This mandatory reporting is to ensure these federal government agencies can timely support authorized vendors in mitigating and remediating cybersecurity incidents and also ensure critical cybersecurity information is timely disseminated across public and private sectors, mitigating potential impacts of cybersecurity incidents. Authorized vendors will be required to participate in the CISA Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Collaboration Program and the Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity Program. Authorized vendors will be required to ensure their cloud services are compatible and interoperable with DHS and DoD cybersecurity technical programs such as the Continuous Diagnostic and Mitigation, CDM Program. [Inaudible] Trusted Internet Connection, TIC 3.0. Continuing with the cybersecurity requirements, authorized

vendors will be required to report cybersecurity vulnerabilities to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST, National Vulnerability Database to proactively identify, prevent, and mitigate cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Authorized vendors will be required to maintain application marketplaces, cloud services, and authorized vendors information systems, physical computing equipment within the sovereignty of the United States. This is to ensure authorized vendor's physical computing equipment is not subject to foreign jurisdiction or foreign nation's legislation, regulations, or policies. The Department of Defense, Department of State, and the intelligence community have a waiver of this requirement if they decide to leverage it at the task order level. The Ascend BPA team is looking for comments and recommendations for middleware disclosures, secure software development, software bill of materials, and supply chain risk management as they apply to cloud services. Specifically, for middleware disclosures, the Ascend BPA team is looking for information on what agents or probes authorized vendors may deploy in their cloud services and what disclosure requirements should be included in the Ascend BPA. For secure software development, the Ascend BPA team is looking for assistance with identifying key activities, best practices, and other requirements that support secure software development and secure cloud services development. For supply chain risk management, the Ascend BPA team is looking for assistance with identifying best practices and other requirements eligible users and authorized vendors are using to ensure the authenticity and security of hardware and software used to provide cloud services.

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It is especially important to ensure authorized vendors provide timely cybersecurity information to eligible users. Authorized vendors will be required to provide a cybersecurity information and management interface. The cybersecurity information and management interface is required to display a minimum set of required data elements such as notification date, deadline suspense

date, notification type, severity, actions impacted cloud services, et cetera. The Ascend BPA does not explicitly define the implementation nor format of the cybersecurity information and management interface. Only that the required data elements are easily accessible to eligible users. Authorized vendors will be required to provide APIs that will allow eligible users to access the same data elements and information available via the cybersecurity information management interface. The APIs will allow eligible users to use third party security event and incident management solutions. Authorized vendors will be required to provide identity and access management APIs that will allow eligible users to manage identities, access, and permissions. The APIs will allow eligible users to use third party identity and access management solutions that provide capabilities such as managing identities, access and permissions across multiple cloud environments. This slide highlights section numbers for Sub-Pool 1-1, cybersecurity requirements with analogous sections for Sub-Pools 1-2 and 1-3. The next slide will provide a side by side comparison. Can I please have the next slide?

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The Pool 1, Sub-Pools 10-1, 1-2, and 1-3 are differentiated by cybersecurity requirements. Specifically the information classification level of the data being computed, stored, and transmitted in the respective cloud services. Derived from the information classification levels are the facility clearance levels, personnel clearance levels, and the FedRAMP and DCAS authorization levels. Pool 1, Sub-Pool 1-3 does not have a FedRAMP authorization level. FedRAMP authorizations are limited to unclassified and controlled unclassified information. As a result, Sub-Pool 1-3 is only for cloud services with a DCAS IL 6 authorization. Note, clearance levels for personnel increase in the following order. Low to high, Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 4, Tier 3, Tier 5. Note, clearance levels for personnel are not sequential. Tiers 1, 2, and 4 are for public trust

positions while Tier 3 and Tier 5 are for national security positions, secret and top secret respectively. Note, the Ascend BPA will not determine if a cloud service is an infrastructure as a service or platform as a service offering. The Ascend BPA will inherit the service model from FedRAMP and DCAS. The Ascend BPA team is looking for comments and recommendations to ensure authorized vendors can freely report all cybersecurity incidents to the appropriate federal agencies. The Ascend BPA is planning on including this draft requirements language on cybersecurity reporting restrictions or limitations. This requirement is sourced directly from Executive Order 14028, improving the nation's cybersecurity Section 2. I quote from executive order, "Removing barriers to sharing threat information, the federal government contract with IT and OT service providers to conduct an array of day-to-day functions on federal information systems. These service providers, including cloud service providers, have unique access to and insight into cyber threat and incident information on federal information systems. At this time, current contract terms or restrictions may limit the sharing of such threat or incident information with executive departments and agencies that are responsible for investigating or remediating cyber incidents, such as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, CISA, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, FBI, and other elements of the Intelligence community.

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Removing these contractual barriers and increasing the sharing of information about such threats, incidents, and risks are necessary steps to accelerating incident deterrent, prevention, and response efforts and to enabling more effective defensive agency systems and of information collected process and maintained by or for the federal government." The Ascend BPA team is looking for comments and recommendations on the classification of cloud services as critical infrastructure under the information technology sector for the Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency. The information technology

sector defines six critical functions that support the information technology sector's ability to provide high assurance IT products and services for various other critical infrastructure sectors. Provide IT products and services. Provide incident management capabilities. Provide domain name resolution services. Provide identity management and associated trust support services. Provide internet based content information and communication services. Provide internet routing, access, and connection services. Classifying cloud services as critical infrastructure would invoke the cyber incident reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act of 2002 and standardized reporting times for cybersecurity incidents to be reported within 72 hours and ransomware payments to be reported within 24 hours. Can I please have the next slide?

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FAR Clause 52.204-27, Prohibition on ByteDance Covered Application. Prohibits any application or service developed by ByteDance Limited, TikTok from being installed or accessed on or by federal government devices and specific IT equipment used or provided by federal contractors under a contract. Cloud services provide under the Ascend BPA will be subject to the far clause. The ascend BPA team is proposing this draft language to standardize at the Ascend BPA level, how the FAR Clause will be applied to cloud services procured under the Ascend BPA. The draft language defines the prohibition on ByteDance applications or services as applying to the cybersecurity, logical, and physical domains of the authorized vendors cloud services, information systems connected to those cloud services, and any information systems containing government furnished information. Can I please have the next slide? The Ascend BPA team is looking for comments and recommendations on how the Ascend BPA should address Software Bill of Materials, SBOMs, to supply chain risk management. The proposed language does not require the delivery of SBOMs, but allows authorized vendors to identify the

availability of SBOMs and their service catalogs and to make those SBOMs accessible to eligible users. Eligible users could then consider the availability of SBOMs when evaluating potential cloud solutions. The Ascend BPA team is specifically looking for eligible users to identify if the proposed language is sufficient or if SBOM should be made mandatory at the Ascend BPA level. To ensure eligible users and law enforcement entities have access to cloud, access to conduct cybersecurity, incident forensics, inspections, and investigations, the Ascend BPA team is proposing the following requirements. Authorized vendors have to fully comply and support all cybersecurity incident forensic, inspections, and investigations. Provide access to cloud services data, provide logical access to cloud services computing equipment, and provide physical access to cloud services data centers. Can I please have the next slide?

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The Ascend BPA team would like to highlight these draft data requirements. The Ascend BPA data requirements are significant under the acknowledgement that the only item that eligible users own when using commercial cloud services is their data. It is critical to ensure that eligible users' data remains confidential, retains integrity, and remains available. These data requirements parallel the Ascend BPA cybersecurity requirements. The Ascend BPA requires all persons that will have logical or physical access to eligible users data to the US persons. Please, let me review the official definition of a US person. 22 CFR 120-61 defines US person as a person who is lawfully permanent resident as defined by 8 USC 1101, or who is protected individual as defined by 8 USC 1324. 8 USC 1101 defines a lawfully admitted for permanent residence as a person with the status of having been lawfully accorded with the privilege of residing permanently in the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the immigration laws. 8 USC 1324 defines a protected individual as a citizen or national of the US. And alien

who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence is granted the status of an alien lawfully

admitted for temporary residence, admitted as a refugee or is granted asylum.

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Authorized vendors will be required to deliver a data collection disclosure deliverable that

documents the data authorized vendors will collect on eligible users and how that data is

managed to include who has possession and access to that data, how the data is used,

retention period, and availability of eligible users to request deletion of the data. The Ascend

BPA has reserved the Post-Quantum Cryptography section at this time. Requirements will be

populated when the National Institute of Standards and Technology publishes Post-Quantum

Cryptography algorithms and standards. Authorized vendors will be required to maintain eligible

users' data within the sovereignty of the US. This is to ensure eligible users' data is not subject

to foreign jurisdictions or foreign nations' legislation, regulations, or policies. The Department of

Defense, Department of State, and the intelligence community have a waiver of this requirement

if it decides to leverage it at the task order level. Under data management, authorized vendors

will have to ensure that eligible users' data remains confidential, retains integrity, and remains

available by securing eligible users' data from unauthorized access, from spillage contained to

designated security boundaries, from unauthorized destruction, from unauthorized data mining

and scanning, from unauthorized data monetization, from unauthorized release, and from

unauthorized sharing. Authorized vendors are also explicitly prohibited without written

authorization to use eligible users' data to develop, optimize, research, train, et cetera, artificial

intelligence or machine learning algorithms. The unauthorized use of eligible users' data in

artificial intelligence or machine learning algorithms will require the artificial intelligence or

machine learning algorithms to be deleted, purged, reset, and/or destroyed. Authorized vendors

will be required to report data management incidents to eligible users. If a data management

incident reaches the level of a cybersecurity incident, authorized vendors will report the data management incident as a cybersecurity incident. Authorized vendors are prohibited from transiting eligible users data across communication networks that are within or connected with countries designated as state sponsors of terrorism or entities subject to US Department of State or US Department of Treasury sanctions. Authorized vendors will be required to inform eligible users when they receive judicial or law enforcement orders that have the potential to impact the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of eligible users' data. All software that is owned by eligible users and deployed within authorized vendors cloud services remain the property of the eligible users.

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The Ascend BPA team would like to highlight these draft environmental and sustainability requirements. Data centers providing cloud services can have significant impacts to our local, national, and global environments. Therefore, the ascend BPA is including environmental and sustainability requirements to reduce and mitigate negative environmental impacts. Data centers that provide cloud services generate a significant amount of e-waste. That includes PCB chemicals and heavy metals. And proper processing and disposal is required. In order to ensure the proper processing and disposal of e-waste, the Ascend BPA requires authorized vendors to use an e-Stewards or R2 Certified Electronic Recycler. Data centers use massive amounts of power. In order to mitigate and reduce the carbon footprint of these data centers, the Ascend BPA is requiring authorized vendors to use Carbon Pollution-Free Electricity, CFE. Carbon Pollution-Free Electricity is power generated from marine energy, solar, wind, hydro kinetic, including tidal, wave, current, and thermal. Geothermal, hydroelectric, nuclear, renewable sourced hydrogen and electrical energy generation from fossil resources. To the extent, there is active capture and storage of carbon dioxide emissions that meet the Environmental Protection

Agency requirements.

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Via the usage of the Ascend BPA, the administrative agency is driving the demand signal for the commercial marketplace to provide e-waste services and CFE, leveraging demand and supply economics. In order to account for price differentials between CFE and non-CFE power, authorized vendors are allowed in their service catalogs to identify cloud services that are powered by CFE and non-CFE as distinct services with distinct prices. Authorized vendors will also be allowed in their service catalogs to identify cloud services that are leveraging Energy Star or NEP Certified Hardware. Eligible users, as a result of the service catalogs, identifying CFE and energy efficiency offerings, will be able to identify and procure environmental and sustainable cloud services. The usage of CFE power by federal government agencies will also support their compliance with Executive Order 14057, Clean Energy Industries and Jobs, Efforts to Catalyze Through Federal Sustainability, and Executive Order 14008, Tackling The Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. The Ascend BPA team would like to highlight these draft operational requirements. Authorized vendors will be required to provide a customer management solution that manages communications, concerns, inquiries, issues, et cetera from eligible users. Authorized vendors will deliver source usage reports -- service usage reports to eligible users at the completion of each task orders period of performance when eligible users award a non-consumption based firm fixed price task order for cloud services. The service usage report is intended to provide eligible users with a necessary information to support the recompete of requirements and ensure all authorized vendors have the appropriate information to develop and submit competitive proposals. The service usage report will not include any price information. In order to support the eligible user's operational management and monitoring of cloud services, authorized vendors will be required to provide an operational management and

monitoring interface. The operational management and monitoring interface is required to display the minimum set of defined data elements for cloud services, such as operational status, performance status, uptime, average utilization, electrical energy source, tags, et cetera. Display both real-time operational information. Update at least every 15 minutes. And historical and archive operational information, update at least every 24 hours. The Ascend BPA does not explicitly define the implementation nor format of the operational management and monitoring interface. Only that the required data elements are easily accessible to eligible users. Authorized vendors will be required to provide application programming interfaces that will allow eligible users to access the same data elements and information available via the information management and monitoring interface. The APIs will allow eligible users to use third party operational management and monitoring solutions that provide advanced capabilities such as aggregating operational and performance data from multiple cloud environments. Can I please have the next slide?

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Authorized vendors will be required to provide the operational notifications to eligible users of cloud services. These operational notifications include emergency maintenance windows, negative or degraded cloud services performance, plan maintenance windows, cloud services plan discontinuations, et cetera. Authorized vendors will be required to provide APIs that will allow eligible users to access operational notifications. Authorized vendors will be required to provide operational support, Tier 0 to Tier 3 help desk, with appropriate case management solutions to support the reporting, managing, escalating, and resolving eligible users help desk tickets, incidents, work orders, et cetera. Operational support is limited to resolving cloud services performance issues and does not include engineering services. Engineering services will be provided under Pool 3, Cloud Related IT Professional Services. Currently, the operational

requirements at the Pool 1, Sub-Pool level are marked reserved. Can I please have the next slide?

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The Ascend BPA team would like to highlight these draft technical requirements. The Ascend BPA requires APIs. These APIs are required to ensure the ability of eligible users to use third party applications and services to monitor, manage, and operate cloud services, and to ensure a continued, robust, competitive, and innovative third party application and services marketplace. The API's disclosure provides eligible users and third parties with the technical information to appropriately and securely implement the required APIs. The API disclosure requires description of the APIs and the API's parameters, API protocols and security requirements, API error codes and corrective actions, and examples of correct API implementations. The Ascend BPA has reserved the section for artificial intelligence and machine learning technical requirements at this time. The Ascend BPA team is monitoring multiple artificial intelligence and machine learning initiatives across the federal government and will corporate requirements as identified pre-solicitation post-award. Authorized vendors under Pool 1 will be required to maintain unimpeded, uninhibited, unrestricted physical and logical control to include administrative, cybersecurity, jurisdictional, management, operational, ownership, and physical security of authorized vendors data centers, providing infrastructure as a service and platform as a service offerings. Authorized vendors will be required to provide at least two high assurance data centers that are concurrently maintainable, geographically diverse, and provide the same cloud services. This will allow eligible users to architect cloud environments to meet eligible users' required reliability levels such as four or five nines and failover continuity of operations configurations. The Ascend BPA has reserved the Service Level Agreement section

to be defined at the task order level, since each eligible user will have their own technical requirements such as latency that will determine specific Service Level Agreements. This concludes the very high level overview of the Ascend BPA requirements. The Ascend VBPA team asks that you share and collaborate with your acquisition, business, cybersecurity, data, environmental and sustainability, operations and technical subject matter experts to review the draft Performance Work Statement and to provide comments and questions on how the Ascend BPA team can improve, refine, and finalize the Ascend BPA requirements. Leveraging cloud services involves multi-disciplinary knowledge, skills, and experiences, which is critical to developing the Ascend BPA. We are inviting you to participate as part of the Ascend BPA team and share your knowledge, skills, and experiences to ensure the Ascend BPA achieves and exceeds the objectives GSA has for the Ascend BPA. Please do not hold back on your comments, recommendations, and criticisms of the Ascend BPA. The Ascend BPA team is holding today's event to ensure the requirements are clear and concise. Includes the appropriate governance and defines clear and delineated roles and responsibilities prior to the official solicitation.

>> All right. We are just at time to resume. I'm going to bring Mr. Wingate back to the stage to close this out with a couple more slides.

>> Thank you, Barry. Thank you, Barry. If you give us the next slide. As you've heard and seen, a lot of work has gone into the draft PWS and there's more work to be done with your input. GSA is continuing to invest resources for the long-term use of this BPA. Our technical SMEs have collaborated with several agencies in the building of the requirements to develop standard terms and conditions.

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Ascend will have standard terms and conditions for tailored customer cloud solutions. Along

with your valuable input, we intend to put a vehicle in place to meet the current and future needs

of the cloud buying community. Support. We have a staff of technical needs to perform scope

review. Also take this opportunity to join GSA on our quarterly cloud computing acquisition form

to discuss cloud information. It is open to the government and industry. Lastly, here's some

recommendations for vendors to accomplish in preparation for the release of the solicitation.

Number 1, you must have a GSA MAS contract. The contract has to have the Cloud SIN special

item number 518210C in order to participate in the Ascend Acquisition. This is not a part 15,

Open Market Acquisition. We're posting the solicitation on sam.gov for the widest circulation

information. The form of solicitation will be issued on GSA eBuy. Open market responses will

not be accepted. This is very important. So I will repeat it again. Vendors must have a GSA

contract with the Cloud SIN 518210C to respond to and to be considered for an award. The

services that the vendors plan to quote on for the Ascend BPA must be on their Cloud SIN. We

have been communicating with industry through various engagements to take this time to check

their MAS offerings to ensure they're aligned with the requirements of the BPA. Interested

vendors should submit packages for new contracts or a dual/continuous contract to cover the

entire eight-year period of performance via the GSA FASt Lane process.

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A variation of FedRAMP, a DCAS authorization will be required to respond to who won

depending on which sub-pool the vendors responding to. It is not a requirement at the SIN level.

But by including these authorizations on the SIN, it gives agency a quick pathway to use

modern cloud technologies with emphasis on security and protection of federal information and

helps accelerate the adoption of secure cloud solutions at the enterprise level. We also want to

make sure that you have information on FedRAMP. You can visit the FedRAMP site at

www.fedramp.gov. For questions about FedRAMP, email them at infoatfedramp.gov. Also, we

would like you to get familiar with the FASt Lane process. We'll have one of our FASt Lane experts give a short presentation afterwards, to give the particulars of submitting an e-offer or a modification via the FASt Lane process. Also, determine your teaming and subcontracting arrangements. So take this opportunity to connect with others, like-minded vendors, if it fits into your business model. Okay. Future engagements. We are going to bring Barry back on at this time to tell us about their future engagements on this and BPA. Barry.

>> Yes. Thank you, Charles. As we stated earlier, we focused on Pool 1 for today. However, we did want to let you know about some future engagements that we need your awareness and assistance on. As we wrap up this market research for Pool 1 and shift to preparing the final solicitation, we're also beginning market research for Pools 2 and 3. We are waiting until the February 21st closing deadline for Pool 1 to pass. But shortly thereafter, we'll be releasing proposed sub-pools for Pools 2 and 3 for your input, feedback, and suggestions. Please continue to follow our Interact page as we will be posting notifications about this effort when the timing comes. It's your teams. We said same thing to government, but also to US sellers cloud solutions, you have the business operational and technical knowledge that we need to ensure we're proposing the correct sub-pools with the best structure to support cloud acquisitions and operational needs.

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All right. Charles, back over to you for the last closeout.

>> Thank you, Barry. We're going into the closeout, next steps.

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And we want to hear from you before it's too late. So please review the draft PWS on sam.gov.

It's also posted on eBuy. Look for the posted Q&A form with the PWS. Complete the form and mail it to us at cloudenterprise@gsa.gov. Also, during your time, consider ways that GSA can avoid vendor lock in. Give us that feedback. Consider ways GSA can align with government to give us that feedback because we're looking for ways to align with government legislation, regulation, policies, and the best practices. We need that information from you. Share any existing risks, issues, or challenges. Also, we'd like to let you know Ascend itself will not serve all government cloud requirements nor replace the current GSA Cloud Offerings on our GWACs and MAS contracts. It will provide another option for agencies that need the expertise, security, assurance, and best practices that GSA can provide through their Ascend Cloud BPA. And that may not be on other GSA offerings. You can find the latest updates on all things Ascend on GSA Cloud and Software Interact page. It serve as a central location for Ascend updates. It's where to draft RFQ release, the timelines, and also the Industry Day information. So, we also request all communications and questions concerning the Ascend BPA. Go through the SIN Contracting Officer via cloudenterprise@gsa.gov. This concludes the Ascend Industry Day Draft RFI portion. But before we completely close out, we're offering an abbreviated presentation on the FASt Lane process that we mentioned a few times today. If you are interested in hanging on and learning more about FASt Lane, I simply want a refresher. Please hang on after we end the main session. For those of you that cannot stay with us, we like to sincerely thank you for your time and participation today. Please follow our Interact blog for SIN cloud and software updates at buy.gsa.gov/interact on the cloud and software. Also visit GSA's Cloud Information Center. For more information, on Cloud Acquisition Resources at cic.gsa.gov. Please review the draft PWS on sam.gov and submit comments and recommendation using the posted form. You may also send comments and inquiries to Cloud Enterprise at gsa.gov. With that, we will take a short pause and transition to the FASt Lane session, which will be hosted by Tara Whittley. Thank you

for your participation in the Ascend Industry Day. Thank you.

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