

GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee (GAP FAC) Policy & Practice Subcommittee Meeting

December 22, 2022

The General Services Administration (GSA) Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Policy & Practice Subcommittee (PPS) convened for its second public meeting at 3:00 PM on December 22, 2022, virtually via Zoom, with Steven Schooner, Chair, and Luke Bassis, 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

Subcommittee Members Present:

Steven Schooner, Chairperson	<i>George Washington University</i>
Luke Bassis, Co-Chairperson	<i>Port of Authority of New York and New Jersey</i>
Richard Beutel	<i>George Mason University</i>
Mark Hayden	<i>State of New Mexico</i>
Jennie Romer	<i>Environmental Protection Agency</i>
Stacy Smedley	<i>Building Transparency</i>
Dr. David Waggoner	<i>Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries</i>

Absent: Leslie Cordes, Antonio Doss, Mami Mallory, Amlan Mukherjee, Nigel Stephens, Anish Tilak, Dr. Kimberly Wise White

Guest Speakers & Presenters:

Katie Miller	<i>Senior Leader for Climate Office of Industrial Climate Federal Acquisition Service, 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 Cochenic	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>
Skylar Holloway	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>
Chelsea Pete	<i>Closed Captioner</i>
Daniel Swartz	<i>ASL Interpreters</i>
Jill Lamoreaux	<i>ASL Interpreters</i>

CALL TO ORDER

Boris Arratia, Designated Federal Officer (DFO), opened the public meeting by welcoming the group before turning the discussion over to Chairperson Steven Schooner.

GUEST SPEAKER AND DISCUSSION

Chair Steven Schooner introduced speaker Katie Miller, the Senior Leader for Climate for GSA, who leads climate and sustainability work and creates a foundation to progress it into the future.

The subcommittee had pre-written questions for Katie Miller, due to the speakers limited time:

Q: PPS: A fair amount of research suggests that DoD is the world's largest Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emitter. Because that's defense, does that fall outside of GSA's world? Could you say a word or two about the scope of GSA's/FAS's reach in this context?

A: Katie Miller: DoD is one of our biggest customers, so it somewhat falls within our scope. When it comes to aircraft and weapons procurement systems, that's not something we are doing. Katie Newhouse is interested in this topic, as well as Carrie Myer from DoD.

Q: PPS: How would you feel about a nudge or a change in the federal acquisition rules so that purchases must be made through GSAAAdvantage! or the purchaser would have to do extra work such as filing paperwork on why they didn't purchase the compliant product?

A: Katie Miller: In a perfect world, GSAAAdvantage! would be the easy way to purchase the product. Talking about our challenges, some of our environmental icons on GSA are not always accurate, so we know we need to work in that space to get that accurate and identify all the climate and sustainable products. We get direct feedback from the environmental labeling organization on what the suppliers are putting out there and what meets the federal purchasing requirements. We don't have that for many of those labels, so vendors self-designate those items, and that's where we get inaccurate labeling, so we are working to address that. Doing the extra work made me think of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This requires federal agencies only to purchase Energy Star and energy efficient products. With the exceptions to that, if the agency can't purchase the product because it isn't cost effective or it isn't widely available then the exception writing needs to come from the head of the agency. I think that was written there to deter people because not many want to go to the head of their agency.

In practice, I'm not sure how well this is going. I like the idea of tracking these policies and getting that desired outcome. There isn't a central place right now for tracking that.

Q: PPS: Could you tell us more about the GSA Federal Contractor Climate Action Scorecard?

A: Katie Miller: Jed Eli is the lead for that scorecard, and he recently expanded that to include more information. I would reach out to him to get his take on this since he has a lot of information on this.

Q: PPS: Are there any alternatives to SBTI?

A: Katie Miller: Jed Eli will also be able to answer the question about big contractor engagement with the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTI). That's a question we have in FAR case 2021-015 that is currently out right now asking that same question. We are asking the public for more feedback.

Q: PPS: Regarding the green procurement compilation and the SFTool, are they the same thing or different, and are they working to phase out the confusion?

A: Katie Miller: Green Procurement Compilation is a tool housed within the SFTool and has a specific function: to help federal suppliers and purchasers through the various purchasing requirements and to understand contracting language.

Q: PPS: Do you all have usage statistics on the Green Procurement Compilation (GPC)?

A: Katie Miller: We do have statistics on the GPC. Let me know what specific metrics you are looking for, and I can get that to you.

Q: PPS: I hear from time to time that the GPC doesn't drive people through the environmental aisle. What efforts are being made to create the one stop solution?

A: Katie Miller: I can't get into too many details, but it's on our radar, and we are looking at options since our FAS customers are also looking for the same thing.

Q: PPS: Regarding the 3-part webinar on managing greenhouse gas emissions that FAS did with EPA back in February 2022, do we have any ideas with usage on that?

A: Katie Miller: YouTube data reflects over 600 hits. I'm not sure we have usage data beyond the YouTube data statistic, but I can check to see if we do.

Q: PPS: Other than both, do you see a greater return on investment in trying to drive government officials or the private sector up the learning curve?

A: Katie Miller: There's value in doing both. Thinking about one of the other challenges outlined yesterday about how this isn't a priority in every administration, perhaps we might see a greater return on investment focusing on the private sector. You might hear other opinions on it. Since they're moving in that direction already to become more sustainable with the private sector, you may see that continue to happen, especially if they have customers outside the federal government.

Q: PPS: Is sustainable food on GSA's radar screen?

A: Katie Miller: I would talk to someone in GSA's public building service about this since we don't work within this space in FAS.

Q: PPS: What disciplines do you consider the highest priority?

- Greenhouse gas measurement/assessment/disclosure and targeting.
- Tools to enhance the use of approved/eco label products from the GSA Schedule Environmental Aisle to the SFTool to whatever is next.
- LEED/construction/buildings
- Out of the box ranging from repurposing roofs (for solar or tree/greenspace), open areas on government land (airports, military bases – for solar farms), disincentivizing driving (eliminating free parking, increasing telecommuting – GSA seems all in on that); disincentivizing flying; incentivizing the use of public transportation, etc.
- Others

A: Katie Miller: I would need to think more on this since it involves areas outside the federal acquisition service. The Taskforce on Climate Financial Disclosure (TCFD) looks at climate risk, which isn't on your list, in terms of physical risk, which includes increased precipitation events, storms, droughts, wildfires, and the impact on an organization from that perspective. There's also a transition risk piece focused on the risks associated with transitioning to a low or no carbon economy. That framework is useful because it covers both greenhouse gas reduction and the impacts of climate change. How do we prepare and adapt? TCFD recommendations were born out of the G20 Financial Board because they see it as a global financial risk. Connecting that to financial peace is a good way to drive us forward into the future when we can show financial risk.

Q: Richard Beutel: Is the business model of using third party accreditation standards such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Standards (LEEDS) or EPIET the best way to go about solving reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

A: Katie Miller: That's something we are trying to tackle within the FAS. We have a FAS Acquisition Council (FAC), which reviews our major large contracts such as Alliant, and

we are leveraging that for the large \$100 million plus external government wide contracts to make sure they are screened for greenhouse gas and climate risk and sustainable procurement requirements to make sure those things get in. That's what you are starting to see come out with Alliant & Oasis+. New solicitations are being pulled together and we aren't going back to modify the existing contracts but rather making sure new ones have these requirements in them. The third-party verification for some of these claims was part of a 2010 GSA report on whether we can ask our vendors and contracts to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions. The recommendations to come out of the report were a phased approach where we ask if they are reporting their emissions and where they are, then requiring them to report, and having them 3rd party verified. We saw back then the utility third-party verification to ensure we are getting what we are asking for. I think the FAR case is asking about whether the government should use these third-party standards.

The discussion ended and was turned over to Boris Arratia, DFO.

CALL TO ORDER (continued)

Boris Arratia performed a roll call to confirm attendance and a quorum. A quorum was not met, and Boris passed it back to Steven and Luke.

Chair/Co-Chair Remarks and Introduction

Steven Schooner stressed that there is a lot of work to do, and we need to get started and pick up the pace. We should think about whether we should meet on alternative weeks for administrative meetings, even if only for an hour.

He stated that they talked about three big tasks in the last meeting and didn't get much feedback in the last meeting. We have a mission statement, speaker list, and priorities on which we need more input. Luke & I are more than willing to drive this train and we have more than enough ideas to keep everyone occupied, but we would like to focus on the things everyone is interested in.

One issue that caught him off guard in the other subcommittees is the small business issue is the dominant topic. He suggests that they might be best served to save that issue for the industry engagement group. If all the committees start focusing on small business engagement, then they aren't doing what they are supposed to be doing by dividing and conquering. As a group, they needed to think about leaving that field of space to them.

He mentioned that the shared folders are nicely populated with our meeting information. We are supplementing the folders with readings and news items on the big topics we are discussing here. I assume everyone is aware of the administration's

massive success in turning the corner on the Postal Service's Next General Delivery Vehicle (NGDV), which is the electrification of the fleet. Please let us know if you have thoughts about what we should be populated in the folder.

David Waggoner – Yes, the postal service purchasing a large number of electric vehicles for mail distribution might replace internal combustion engine vehicles, but if the electricity itself is made with fossil fuels, then you have the efficiency trade off question. Is it really emissions shifting? Is that a policy where we say if you are moving to electric vehicles, you must also procure renewable electricity instead of default electricity?

Steve Schooner – That's a great question. If you think about this in terms of requirements instead of procurement, why aren't we talking about having fewer trucks and replacing them with cargo bikes and e-bikes? Why aren't we talking about reducing the amount of junk mail? To David's point, all these policies have by product and executive orders in the like. What is within the zone of our capability? I don't have a good answer, and I'm more than happy to discuss it, but it's a great issue to raise.

Steven Schooner stressed the importance of making progress on the mission statement and that subcommittee members need to be as specific as possible when it comes to speakers.

Rich Beutel – Benchmarking with Industry regarding best practices and constructive and successful strategies to reduce carbon emissions would help the subcommittee. There are a few individuals in that sector that can advise and educate the committee.

Steve handed it over to Luke Bassis for the mission statement.

MISSION STATEMENT DISCUSSION

The committee proceeded to give their thoughts on their current mission statement and referenced the mission statement from the Acquisition Workforce.

Draft Statement: The mission of the Policy & Practice subcommittee is to identify and recommend actionable changes to federal acquisition regulations, policies, and practices that will have a significant and measurable impact in support of climate and sustainability action.

Comments:

- Jennie Romer – No additional suggestions to add and supports the word “actionable” and the focus on climate and sustainability.
- Stacy Smedley – Climate and sustainability action is too broad. We need to be more specific.

- Richard Beutel –We need to focus on creating actionable changes to the FAR policy and practices that will create private sector demand for goods and services that support and sustain climate and sustainability.
- Steve Schooner – Should we be thinking in terms of policy and practice or creating actionable changes to federal acquisition regulations? Creating actionable changes might be too big for this committee.
- Luke Bassis – For our purposes at this point, the broad language gives us the capability to find tools later on.
- David Waggoner – The changes that will have a significant and measurable impact are actionable. The words “actionable” and “significant and measurable” are too far apart.
- Jennie Romer – “federal acquisition regulations” is the specificity we don’t need in the statement. Keep “actionable” in the statement. Actionable lends itself more toward small changes. Are we looking for small changes or big changes?
- Steve Schooner – we should stay ambiguous in our mission statement because our policy & practices could also help a different department outside GSA.
- Richard Beutel - We want to create a climate of appropriate industry incentives and demand generation to bring modern sustainable goods and services into the Federal Government. We want to leverage the private sector to step up to the plate here. We want to discourage industry's parochial view that is looking at short-term profit and not baking those externalities into its product development so we can buy goods and services to achieve these goals.
- Steven Schooner - We want to incentivize the marketplace to rethink its focus, whether it's on profit or growth or self-dealing or maintaining their destructive tendencies. And start thinking more creatively about more sustainable solutions.

An alternative mission statement was proposed: Accelerate demand for sustainable goods and services through policies and practices that will have a significant and measurable impact in support of climate and sustainability action.

The group agreed at the next meeting that they would agree on which mission statement to select or there needed to be another alternative.

Steve Schooner asked if there was anything else before moving on. David Waggoner had a question about “accelerate demands” in the new mission statement.

David Waggoner – When we say “accelerate demands” in the mission statement, is it through federal government action getting producers to produce more so people will see the signal of more supply and demand?

Richard Beutel - It's an acknowledgement that the power and creativity of the private sector will solve this problem, not the Government's issuance of additional binders of

regulatory dictate. The Government can create an environment of demand and business opportunity to create incentives for the private sector to step up and give us the things we need to achieve this goal and objective and writing more FAR rules or amending isn't going to get us there.

Stacey Smedly – Leaning toward mission statement two because we can satisfy David's question through how we define what we're talking about if we're accelerating demand for sustainable goods and services. You can't buy this thing that's worse, but we can also say to buy the thing that's not as bad, you also have to do things to create the supply in a way that's equitable for the same kind of policy. There are ways to do both. That's what's happening with the IRA funding for low-carbon procurement where we have requirements about low carbon products and things that are going to say, you can only buy things that are lower carbon. At the same time, tons of money is going towards the solutions that must decarbonize those products even further to meet requirements. We have the flexibility in the second one to be able to address both sides of things. It's broad enough but the word "demand" is important to Rich's point.

David Waggoner – Who's demand are we talking about? Is it the government's demand or someone else's?

Stacey Smedley – we don't want to get specific about whose demand it is. It's general demand a larger procurer can help signal the demand and help those along in terms of what requirements are.

Luke Bassis and Steve Schooner decided to discuss group priorities at the next meeting. Steve Schooner opened the shared drive to discuss recommended speakers. He also encouraged the members to add speakers they were interested in hearing from to the document.

Steve reviewed the list of recommended speakers.

Steve Schooner - In the shared drive, there is a pending invitation to Porter Glock, the person in the office of federal procurement policy with the primary portfolio on this. Because the FAR rule focuses on assessment disclosure and targeting, we should think about bringing in speakers on that or on SBTI. We could expect our community to learn this stuff on their own because the greenhouse gas protocol has a lot of training on this.

We could bring in a speaker on life cycle cost analysis that permits procurement officials to reorient their thinking about value.

Stacy Smedley – I would recommend someone that can define the difference between life cycle cost analysis and life cycle analysis and how they play into procurement.

Steve Schooner continued with the list of recommended speakers. The Chancery Lane project interests the group as they are a global group of people thinking about standard terms and conditions. The group was also encouraged to hear from the OASIS team drafting a request for proposal along with Alliant.

There is a willingness to hear from experiences abroad from Liesbeth Casier and Farid Yaker.

Jennie Romer – added Carrie Myer’s name in the speaker’s document. She’s in the environmental data quality work group at the department of defense.

Steve Schooner mentioned that just because a speaker has spoken to another subcommittee doesn’t mean we can’t see their presentation. There’s value in seeing what the other subcommittees are doing.

Stacey Smedley shared she is working with large corporations like Microsoft & Amazon, which are global procurers creating policies around some of the subcommittee priorities. They would be willing to share with the group.

The group will work to hear from Jed Eli to talk about the GSA Federal Contractor Climate Action Scorecard.

Before the group handed the meeting to Boris, Jennie Romer added to the mission statement. The word “identifying” is still a big part of the mission statement and needs to be added. A mission statement option three was created.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stephanie Hardison suggested using either “promote” or “advance” in the mission statement in terms of actionable changes to the policy.

CLOSING REMARKS

Luke Bassis welcomed Troy Cribb for final remarks.


Troy Cribb expressed her appreciation for being able to sit in on the meetings. All the subcommittees are off to a great start, and the potential scope of issues each subcommittee is looking at is huge and daunting, so she is appreciative of the efforts everyone is making. Troy thanked everyone for their participation and wished everyone a happy holiday.

Steven Schooner thanked the subcommittee members who were able to join today.

ADJOURNMENT

Boris Arratia reminded the subcommittee that materials would be in the shared drives and on the website. He adjourned the meeting at 5:00 PM EST.

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

DocuSigned by:

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2/1/2024

Luke Bassis

Co-Chairperson

GAP FAC Policy & Practice Subcommittee

Former Chair, Steven Schooner was succeeded by Luke Bassis on September 28, 2023.