

What We've Got Here is Failure to Communicate

How better communication can improve DoD acquisition outcomes

May 7, 2025

“A vibrant innovation ecosystem depends upon clear communication to ensure partners have accurate information and can build complementary processes to enable effective collaboration.”

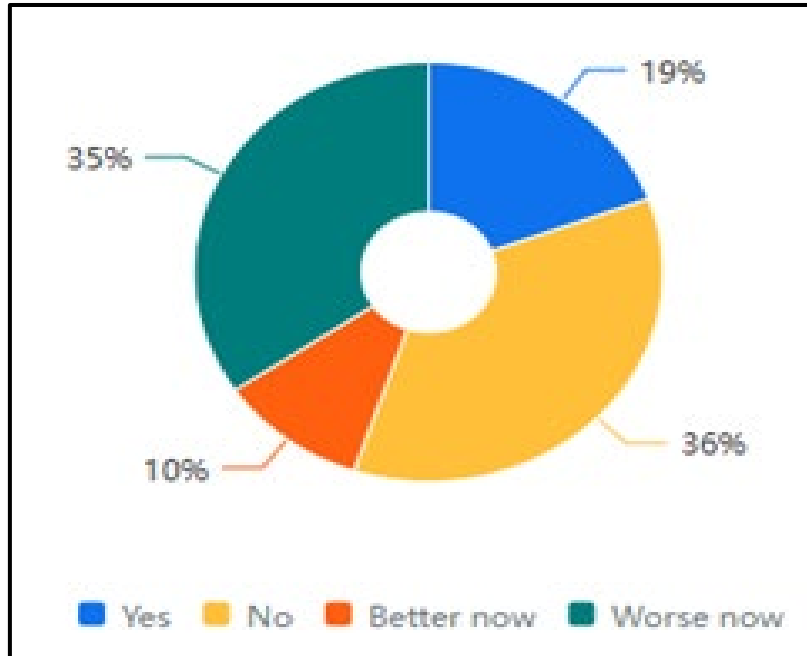
(DoD Strategic Management Plan: FY24 Annual Performance Report, p. 85)

Why Were Consortia Established?

“develop a new approach to contracting that encouraged collaboration and communication between government and a diverse team of industry participants throughout the acquisition process”

How is DoD doing?

Is there good communication between government and industry?



Source: 2023 presentation by Khalil Mack, then Director of APEX Accelerators in DoD

How is DoD Doing?

NDIA Vital Signs, 2025

What is difficult about government acquisition processes?

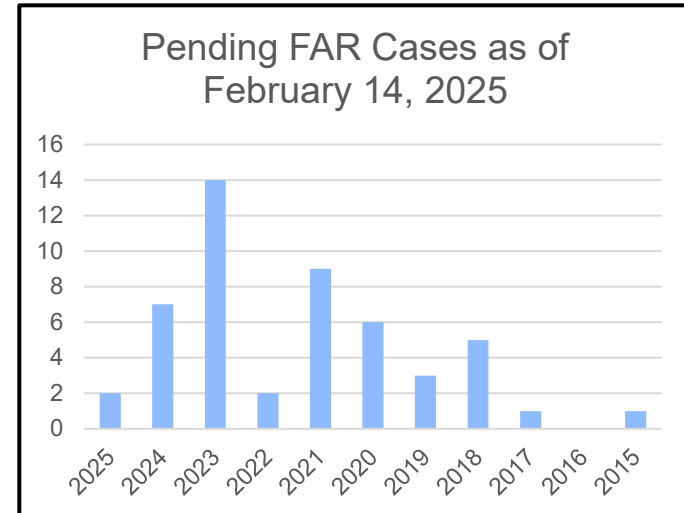
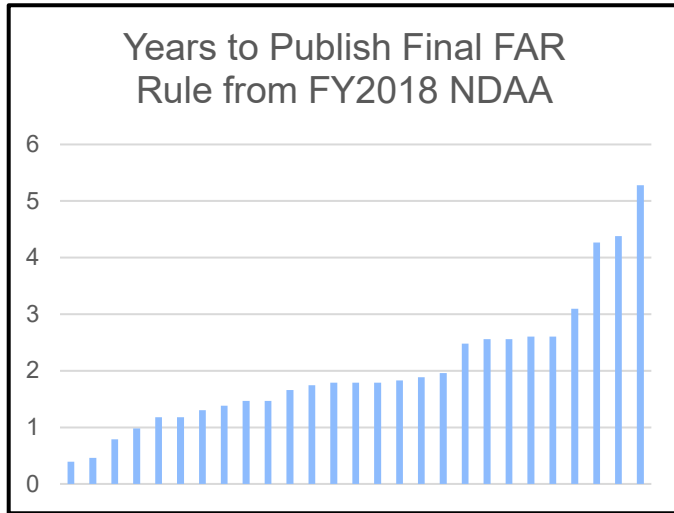
- 58% - unclear or changing requirements

What can DoD do to improve its ability to work with industry?

- 53% govt / 65% industry - provide clear, consistent demand signal through contract vehicles

**Actions Speak Louder
than Words**

The Regulatory Process



Bid Protests

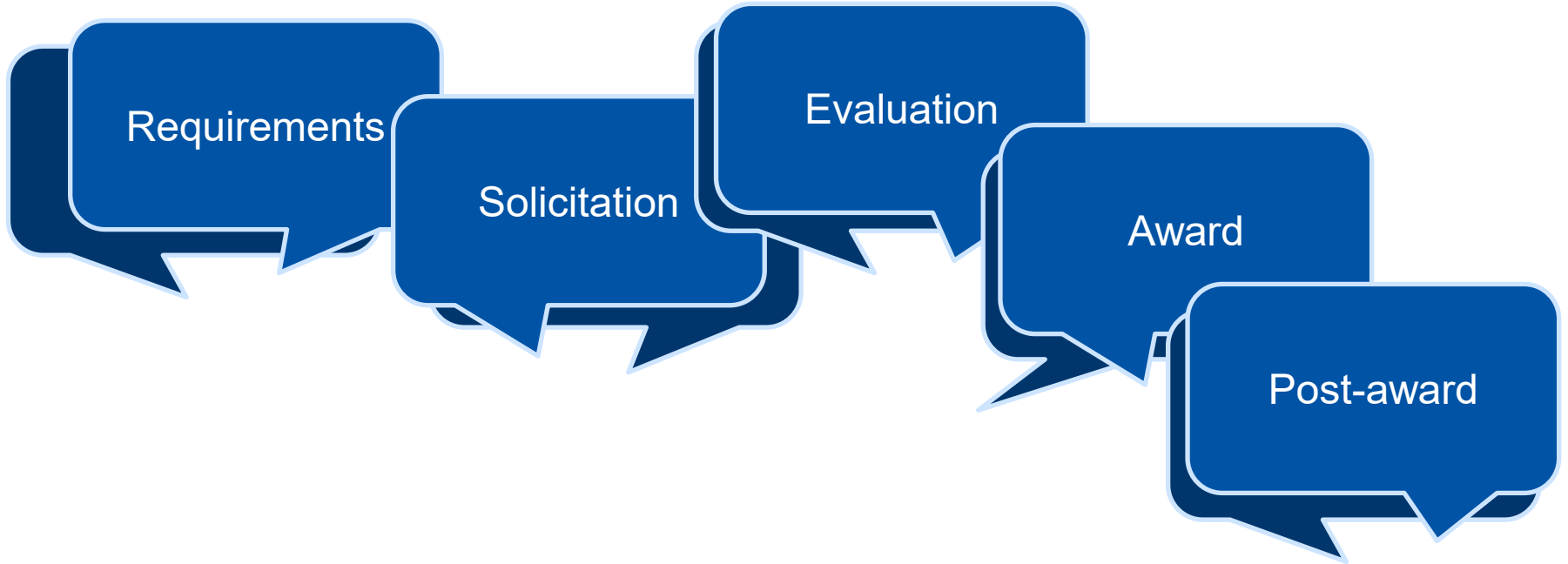
Solid Rocket Motors Call For Papers

Why did DoD expect 10-15 responses but get more than 60?





Acquisition Is Communication



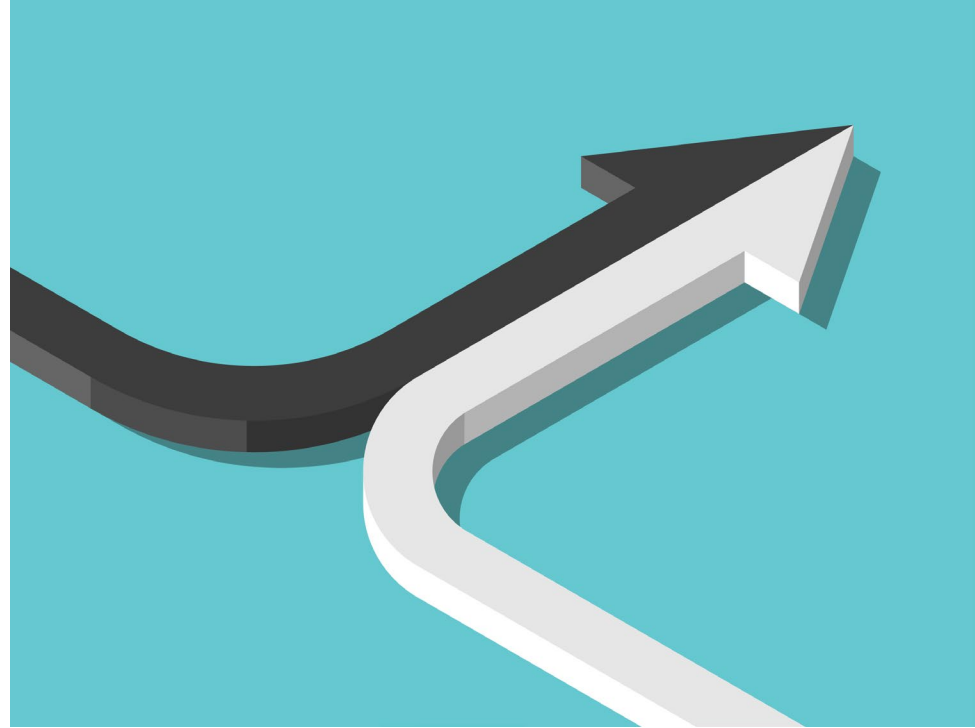
It's Not Just An Industry Problem

“The granting of additional budget flexibility to the Department is based on the presumption that a state of trust and comity exists between the legislative and executive branches regarding the proper use of appropriated funds. This presumption presently is false.”



A Framework For Communication

- Timely and responsive feedback
- Allow for information to flow both ways along the communication channel
- Be meaningful, not formulaic
- Treat individual communications as part of a larger relationship
- Build new knowledge collaboratively
- Establish trust
- And most importantly, foster an environment where communication is encouraged



Questions?