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Systematic Approach to Managing Human Trafficking Risks in Defense Contracting

June 2025

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Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943

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ABSTRACT

The Department of Defense (DoD) faces growing scrutiny over its ability to prevent human trafficking, particularly forced labor, in its overseas construction contracts. Despite the USG zero-tolerance policy and various compliance measures, oversight bodies have repeatedly found that the DoD's efforts are fragmented, reactive, and insufficiently risk-informed. This study proposes the integration of the OMB's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework, as outlined in Circular A-123, into the DoD's Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) program. Through qualitative analysis of policy documents, federal regulations, and oversight reports, this research maps current CTIP practices against ERM's five core risk management phases: identification, assessment, response, monitoring, and communication. The study reveals significant gaps across the contract life cycle, particularly in pre-award planning and post-award oversight. To address these gaps, the study presents a comprehensive ERM-integrated CTIP framework designed to shift the DoD's approach from reactive enforcement to proactive risk management. Recommendations include implementing trafficking risk screening tools, enhancing contractor vetting, standardizing monitoring practices, and improving interagency data sharing. The proposed framework aims to better protect vulnerable laborers, strengthen contractor accountability, and ensure the DoD's contracting practices align with both ethical standards and legal mandates

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MAJ Ammar M. Masoud, is a Contracting Officer (51C) with 19 years of military service. He began his military career in 2005 as an Enlisted Cryptologic Linguist, later commissioned into the Signal Corps, then served as a Civil Affairs Officer with a focus on the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). He transitioned to the Army Acquisition Corps, where he now serves as a Contracting Officer. MAJ Masoud holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and is a Certified Federal Contract Manager (CFCM), Project Management Professional (PMP), and Certified Contract Management Associate (CCMA). He is currently completing his Master of Science degree in Defense Contract Management at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey. His next assignment is with the 925th Contracting Battalion at Fort Drum, NY, supporting the Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC) and the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

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I would also like to acknowledge the many contracting officers and acquisition professionals who generously shared their operational experiences and insights. Though they chose to remain anonymous, their contributions grounded this research in real-world practice and shaped its practical relevance.

Finally, I hope this research serves as a valuable resource for advancing systematic risk management in defense contracting and supports the broader effort to eliminate human trafficking from U.S. government supply chains. Its recommendations are offered with the goal of strengthening ethical procurement practices, protecting vulnerable workers across global DoD operations, and ensuring that defense contractors are held accountable for both preventing and reporting trafficking violations within their operations and supply chains.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAFES	Army and Air Force Exchange Service
ACQ	Acquisition
ACQ.gov	Acquisition.gov (Official website for federal acquisition regulations)
CFOC	Chief Financial Officers Council
CMS	Contract Management Standard
CO	Contracting Officer
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CPARS	Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSB	Contracting Support Brigade
CTIP	Combating Trafficking in Persons
CTIP PMO	Combating Trafficking in Persons Program Management Office
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DCMA	Defense Contract Management Agency
DFARS	Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoD IG	Department of Defense Inspector General
DODEA	DoD Education Activity
DODHRA	Department of Defense Human Resources Activity
DoD OIG	Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DOS	Department of State
DPCAP	Defense Pricing, Contracting, and Acquisition Policy
EO	Executive Order
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
FAPIIS	Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FHTR	Federal Human Trafficking Report

FPDS	NG Federal Procurement Data System–Next Generation
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GSA	General Services Administration
IG	Inspector General
IGStat	Inspector General Statistical System
IGRisk	Inspector General Risk Management System
ILO	International Labour Organization
KO	Contracting Officer
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NAP	National Action Plan
NCMA	National Contract Management Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NSPD	National Security Presidential Directive
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OUSD	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense
OUSD(A&S)	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment
PITF	President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
PMO	Program Management Office
PSC	Product and Service Codes
QA	Quality Assurance
QASP	Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan
RFP	Request for Proposal
S&D	Suspension and Debarment
SAPR	Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
SDO	Suspension & Debarment Official
SME	Subject Matter Expert

SOFA	Status of Forces Agreements
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TVPA	Trafficking Victims Protection Act
TVPPRA	Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act
VTVPA	Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act
USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
USD(P&R)	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
USG	United States Government

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking, particularly in the form of forced labor, poses significant ethical and legal challenges in federal contracting. The Department of Defense (DoD), as one of the largest contracting agencies in the United States government (USG) (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2014), is responsible for ensuring that its procurement processes comply with anti-trafficking requirements, including protections against forced labor in overseas construction services contracts. Military construction services are particularly critical, as they directly support force protection, operational readiness, and the sustainability of overseas missions; yet they represent a high-risk area for trafficking violations in DoD contracts (Morris et al., 2021). Despite this responsibility, recent reports from the GAO (2024b) indicate that the DoD has not yet fully implemented a systematic approach to manage human trafficking risks in its procurement practices. The absence of a structured risk management framework leaves the DoD vulnerable to trafficking violations, particularly in contracts supporting overseas operations.

This study responds to the gap highlighted in the 2024b GAO report titled *Agencies Need to Adopt a Systematic Approach to Manage Risks in Contracts (GAO-24-106973)*, which recommends the adoption of a more structured risk management process. Specifically, recommendation #2 urges the DoD to adopt a structured risk management process to address trafficking risks in contracts. Furthermore, this research focuses on forced labor risks in DoD construction contracts executed overseas, where research has shown that complex subcontracting arrangements create heightened trafficking vulnerabilities (Morris et al., 2021). This research seeks to propose a systematic framework, leveraging the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework Circular A-123. By aligning the DoD's current Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Program Management Office's (PMO) practices with the ERM framework, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for mitigating human trafficking risks in defense contracts, particularly in high-risk areas.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the DoD's ongoing efforts to combat human trafficking, its current approach to managing trafficking risks in overseas construction contracts remains fragmented and inconsistent. According to Morris et al. (2021), military construction services contracts, particularly in overseas operations, present heightened risks for trafficking violations due to their labor-intensive nature and complex subcontracting arrangements. The GAO's 2024b report (*GAO-24-106973*) underscores the lack of a structured risk management system within the DoD, which has resulted in challenges in identifying, mitigating, and monitoring forced labor risks in contracts. Although regulations such as Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 22.17 and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) provide some guidance, there is no unified framework to ensure compliance across all stages of the contract life cycle.

This research seeks to address this gap by proposing a systematic approach to managing human trafficking risks in DoD contracts, using the OMB ERM Circular A-123 as a guiding framework. The absence of such a framework leaves the DoD exposed to potential trafficking violations, particularly in contracts for construction services executed in high-risk areas, such as countries identified as tier two, tier two watch list or tier three high-risk areas of human trafficking (Department of State [DOS], 2024b). A quantitative analysis of DoD spending revealed that the DoD awarded $13.1 billion in contracts between 2018–2020 in countries such as Afghanistan and Kuwait, which are not making significant efforts to combat human trafficking (Morris et al., 2021). Addressing this gap is critical for the DoD to comply with the U.S. Government (USG) zero-tolerance policy on human trafficking while also enhancing the integrity of its procurement processes in what Morris et al. (2021, p. v) describe as "a world of complex, opaque supply chains and constrained human and capital resources."

B. RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of this study is to develop and propose a systematic framework to improve the DoD's management of human trafficking risks, with a focus on forced labor in overseas construction services contracts. This research specifically focuses on the gap in the DoD's current practices and seeks to determine whether the

OMB ERM framework Circular A-123 can be integrated into the DoD's CTIP PMO processes to enhance its ability to identify, mitigate, and monitor trafficking risk.

The research has four objectives:

- Analyze the current state of the DoD's efforts to manage human trafficking risks in procurement processes, with a focus on overseas construction services
- Map the existing CTIP PMO processes against the OMB ERM framework, identifying areas where current practices fall short
- Identify gaps and challenges in the DoD's risk management approach, providing actionable recommendations to improve the management of trafficking risks in defense contracts
- Propose specific interventions to strengthen monitoring, review, and compliance processes within the DoD procurement to ensure adherence to anti-trafficking policies

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary and secondary research questions are as follows:

1. Primary Research Question: How can the Department of Defense develop and implement a systematic approach to managing human trafficking risks in its procurement processes?
2. Secondary Research Questions:

- What are the current practices and limitations in the DoD's approach to identifying and analyzing trafficking risks in its procurements?
- How effective are the DoD's current responses to identified trafficking risks in contracts?
- What challenges exist in communicating trafficking risks and mitigation strategies to contracting officials?
- How can the DoD improve its monitoring and review processes for anti-trafficking compliance in contracts?
- How does the current DoD CTIP PMO process align with the OMB ERM framework?

D. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research focuses on managing forced labor risks in overseas military construction services contracts, specifically within the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) area of responsibility, with particular emphasis on the 408th Contracting Support Brigade's operations in Kuwait. The focus on construction services is strategically chosen as it represents one of the highest-risk categories under the DoD-

wide Acquisitions of Services portfolio (Morris et al., 2021). This targeted geographic scope allows for an in-depth examination of risk management practices in an environment where trafficking risks are particularly acute. While this research acknowledges broader human trafficking concerns in supply chains, it deliberately narrows its focus to the processes within the DoD's contracting practices and the operations of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) CTIP PMO. This concentrated approach enables the development of specific, actionable recommendations for implementing risk management frameworks such as the OMB ERM Circular A-123 in high-risk contracting environments.

E.   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this research extends beyond its potential to provide a clear, actionable framework for addressing human trafficking risks in DoD contracts. By aligning the DoD's CTIP processes with the OMB ERM Circular A-123, this study addresses critical operational, legal, and ethical imperatives. Studies have shown that forced labor risks in military construction contracts can lead to serious consequences, including contractor debarment, mission delays, and compromised force protection measures (Morris et al., 2021; GAO, 2012). For instance, a 2019 DoD Office of the Inspector General (DoD OIG) report found that in Kuwait, a DoD food services contractor subjected migrant workers to debt bondage, excessive recruitment fees, and substandard living conditions, highlighting the urgent need for improved risk management in such high-risk regions. Furthermore, trafficking violations directly contradict the U.S. Government's zero-tolerance policy on trafficking in persons, potentially damaging diplomatic relationships and the DoD's global reputation (The White House, 2002).

These challenges are particularly evident in a global operational environment. In regions where contracts are executed with varying levels of compliance, the development of a systematic risk management framework is not only necessary for operational success but also for maintaining the DoD's legal and moral obligations to uphold human rights and ethical procurement practices (*Trafficking Victims Protection Act* [TVPA], 2000, sec. 112). Moreover, as human trafficking represents a severe threat to national security,

economic development, and prosperity (*Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act* [VTVPA], 2000), this framework becomes crucial for protecting both the integrity of DoD operations and broader national security interests.

F.   METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology aimed at exploring the gaps in managing human trafficking risks in DoD contracts, specifically focusing on forced labor in overseas construction services. The research is based on a thorough document analysis of key sources such as GAO reports, FAR, DFARS provisions, Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) theses, DoD policy documents, and other human trafficking reports. This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of existing practices and helps identify deficiencies in the current risk management processes.

In particular, the study maps the DoD's CTIP PMO processes to the OMB ERM framework Circular A-123. Through this mapping, the research explores how the DoD can adopt and effectively implement a systematic risk management approach to mitigate human trafficking risks. In addition to document analysis, the study includes an evaluation of CTIP process maps to identify gaps and shortcomings in current practices related to forced labor risks in DoD contracts. The findings culminate in actionable recommendations aimed at improving the DoD's anti-trafficking risk management efforts in its overseas contracts.

Moreover, the study incorporates a series of interviews with human trafficking experts and contracting officers to gain deeper insights into the practical challenges and experiences faced in managing human trafficking risks within DoD contracts. These interviews aim to capture firsthand perspectives on the effectiveness of current risk management practices and to identify additional gaps that may not be evident through document analysis alone. Furthermore, the research benchmarks the risk management strategies employed by other federal agencies, such as the State Department, which, according to the latest 2024b GAO report, has established robust frameworks for managing risks in federal contracts. By comparing the DoD's processes with those of other agencies, the study seeks to uncover best practices and innovative approaches that

could enhance the DoD's anti-trafficking efforts and ultimately lead to more effective risk management in overseas construction services.

G.   DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

This section introduces foundational definitions and key concepts essential to understanding forced labor as a form of human trafficking. Grounded in legal frameworks such as the TVPA and the FAR, these definitions provide the basis for examining specific anti-trafficking measures in federal and DoD contracts. By clarifying terms central to human trafficking, this section establishes the framework for analyzing regulatory provisions imposed on federal agencies, DoD, and their contractors and subcontractors in efforts to prevent trafficking in persons.

1.   Forced Labor as a Form of Human Trafficking

Forced labor, as defined by the TVPA of 2000, is a form of human trafficking that involves "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery" (p. 7). In the context of military construction services, *Executive Order No. 13627* (2012), *Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts*, and Title XVII of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013* (NDAA, 2013) identified several indicators of forced labor that pose risks to DoD operations. Common practices identified as indicators of forced labor include subcontractors using coerced labor for construction projects, workers being deceived about the nature or conditions of their work, debt bondage where workers are forced to work to pay off a debt, and the restriction of movement or confiscation of identity documents (Executive Order No. 13627, 2012; NDAA, 2013).

2.   Anti-Trafficking Provisions in Federal Acquisition

The FAR and DFARS guidance establish the regulatory framework for preventing trafficking in persons within federal contracts. These regulations implement requirements mandated by EO 13627 and include the following key provisions:

- **FAR Subpart 22.17—Combating Trafficking in Persons:** This subpart outlines the policy and requirements for government contracts to prohibit trafficking in persons (FAR, 2025c).
- **FAR 52.222-50—Combating Trafficking in Persons:** This clause prohibits contractors, subcontractors, and their employees from engaging in trafficking-related activities and must be included in all solicitations and contracts (FAR, 2025c).
- **FAR 52.222-56—Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons Compliance Plan:** This provision requires offerors to certify that they have implemented a compliance plan to prevent trafficking-related activities for certain contracts (FAR, 2025c).
- **DFARS 252.222-7006—Restrictions on the Use of Mandatory Arbitration Agreements:** This clause prohibits the use of mandatory arbitration agreements for certain claims, including those related to trafficking in persons (DFARS, 2025d).
- **DFARS 222.17—Combating Trafficking in Persons:** This section provides additional guidance specific to DoD contracts, supplementing the FAR requirements (DFARS, 2025d).
- **DFARS 252.225-7040—Contractor Personnel Supporting U.S. Armed Forces Deployed Outside the United States:** This clause includes provisions related to preventing trafficking in persons for contractors supporting deployed forces (DFARS, 2025d).

These provisions collectively establish comprehensive anti-trafficking requirements for federal contractors. Specifically, they prohibit contractors and subcontractors from engaging in any trafficking-related activities while requiring them to notify their employees of the U.S. government's zero-tolerance policy (GAO, 2024b). The regulations mandate immediate reporting of any credible information about trafficking-related activities and require the implementation of compliance plans for larger overseas contracts. Furthermore, they establish strict enforcement mechanisms, including contract termination and contractor suspension or debarment for violations (FAR, 2025c).

H.   ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This capstone report is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the research problem by outlining the ethical and legal challenges related to human trafficking risks in DoD contracts. It defines the research purpose, objectives, and questions, and establishes both the scope and significance of the study.

Chapter II offers a comprehensive review of relevant literature, including GAO reports, federal regulations, and best practices in risk management from related fields. It also examines key theoretical frameworks, particularly the OMB ERM Circular A-123, which serves as the basis for the proposed risk management approach. By reviewing existing studies and regulations, this chapter establishes the foundation for understanding the current state of anti-trafficking efforts in the DoD procurement processes.

Chapter III highlights the research methodology with an emphasis on the qualitative research design and document analysis approach. This chapter outlines the data collection methods, such as the examination of GAO reports, DoD policies, NPS theses, and other relevant documents. It also discusses the ethical considerations and provides an overview of how the CTIP processes are mapped against the OMB ERM framework to guide the analysis.

Chapter IV presents the findings and analysis, offering an in-depth examination of current CTIP PMO processes and how they align with the OMB ERM framework. It identifies key gaps in the DoD's management of trafficking risks and explores opportunities for improving risk management practices within its procurement processes. This analysis serves as the basis for the recommendations provided in the final chapter.

Finally, Chapter V summarizes the key findings of the research and presents actionable recommendations for enhancing human trafficking risk management in DoD contracts. It also suggests areas for future research, aimed at continually improving the DoD's efforts to combat trafficking in its procurement practices.

I.   SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the research problem, highlighting the significant gaps in the DoD's current efforts to manage human trafficking risks in overseas construction services contracts. It outlined the study's purpose, which is to propose a systematic framework to address these gaps, and presented the research objectives and questions that will guide the analysis. Additionally, it defined the scope and significance of the study, focusing on forced labor risks in DoD contracts and the potential for improvement through the application of the OMB ERM framework Circular A-123. Chapter II

provides background on the DoD's contract life cycle and identifies potential human trafficking risk vulnerabilities throughout each phase. It reviews CTIP efforts, existing policies, government regulations, scholarly literature, and GAO reports to identify gaps and challenges in the department's current approach to managing human trafficking risks.

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II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

> I'm talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name—modern slavery.
>
> U.S. President Barack Obama (2012)

A.   INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking, particularly in the form of forced labor, remains a pervasive issue with profound ethical, legal, and operational implications. The DoD faces heightened risks in its overseas procurement activities, particularly in construction services contracts. Despite existing anti-trafficking regulations, including Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 22.17 and related Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) provisions, the DoD has not yet adopted a systematic approach to managing human trafficking risks. This gap leaves contracting practices vulnerable to forced labor violations, as highlighted in the 2024b GAO report titled *Agencies Need to Adopt a Systematic Approach to Manage Risks in Contracts (GAO-24-106973)*. This chapter reviews existing literature to identify the critical gaps in the regulatory frameworks, risk management practices, and enforcement mechanisms addressing human trafficking risks in DoD contracts. By examining theoretical and empirical contributions, this chapter establishes a foundation for the thesis objective: proposing a systematic framework for managing and mitigating human trafficking risks in defense contracting.

Despite promoting the USG zero-tolerance policy, forced labor in defense contracts represents a pressing challenge for the DoD due to its complex supply chains, global operational footprint, and the high-risk environments in which its contracts are executed. Recent investigations, such as the 2024b GAO report and related study (Morris et al., 2021), reveal that the DoD's current Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Program Management Office's (PMO) processes lack alignment with the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework Circular A-123. This misalignment hinders the DoD's ability to comprehensively identify, mitigate, and monitor human trafficking risks in its procurement practices.

The purpose of this chapter is to critically analyze the existing body of knowledge on forced labor and trafficking risks in defense procurement. By synthesizing insights from government reports, academic studies, and best practices from related fields, this literature review illuminates the theoretical and practical foundations of trafficking risk management, examine regulatory and enforcement mechanisms currently in place, and identify systematic gaps in the existing literature and DoD risk management frameworks.

A recurring theme across the reviewed literature is the absence of a unified, systematic, and structured framework to managing human trafficking risks across the defense contract life cycle. While significant attention has been given to documenting trafficking violations and establishing regulatory requirements, such as contractor compliance plans and anti-trafficking certifications requirements, they are inconsistently applied and monitored (GAO, 2024a; CTIP PMO, 2020). This fragmentation results in critical vulnerabilities, particularly in high-risk regions such as in Kuwait where labor-intensive construction services are most prevalent. By focusing on the intersection of ERM and anti-trafficking measures, this chapter addresses the need for a comprehensive, systematic risk management approach.

This literature review is organized into six main sections. First, it provides background on forced labor as a form of trafficking within the context of defense procurement, emphasizing risks in global DoD services contracts such as construction. Second, it examines theoretical frameworks for risk management, particularly the OMB's ERM Framework, as a tool for structured risk mitigation. Third, it analyzes the current regulatory environment governing anti-trafficking efforts in federal acquisition, focusing on gaps in enforcement. Fourth, it evaluates government reports and publications, such as those from the GAO, that highlight trafficking risks and oversight challenges. Fifth, it examines best practices from related fields and other federal agencies, drawing lessons from successful anti-trafficking strategies. Finally, it identifies specific gaps in existing literature and frameworks, such as the need for integrated risk models, that this research aims to address. Collectively, these sections provide the essential foundation for proposing a systematic approach to improving the DoD's anti-trafficking efforts through structured risk management practices.

B.   FORCED LABOR RISKS THROUGHOUT THE CONTRACT LIFE CYCLE

Understanding where and how human trafficking risks materialize throughout the DoD contract life cycle is essential for developing effective prevention and monitoring strategies. This section examines the stages of defense procurement where forced labor vulnerabilities are most likely to emerge, particularly in overseas construction services contracts. By mapping these risks to specific phases of the contracting process, from initial planning through contract closeout, this analysis establishes a foundation for identifying critical intervention points where enhanced risk management practices can have the greatest impact. Recognizing these vulnerabilities is a prerequisite for developing the systematic approach to trafficking risk management that GAO has identified as lacking in current DoD practices.

The DoD contract life cycle follows a structured process established by the National Contract Management Association (NCMA) and the DoD Contracting Competency Model, providing a standardized framework from initial planning to contract closeout. Given the complexity of DoD contracts, particularly in overseas operations, human trafficking risks can emerge at various phases of this life cycle. This section outlines these contract phases, as defined by the NCMA Contract Management Standard (CMS), and identifies potential trafficking risks, such as forced labor, drawing on evidence from GAO reports, DoD OIG evaluations, and State Department assessments.

The DoD contract life cycle encompasses three primary phases: Pre-Award, Award, and Post-Award, with each phase presenting unique vulnerabilities to human trafficking risks. Figure 1 illustrates the key activities and job tasks across these three phases of the contract management process. In the Pre-Award phase, contracting officers focus on market research, requirements definition, and risk assessment strategy development. Research by the GAO reveals significant vulnerabilities during this initial phase, particularly due to inadequate vetting of subcontractors and labor brokers (GAO, 2015). More recent studies have highlighted how ambiguous contract language on trafficking compliance in addition to insufficient risk-based screening can enable exploitative labor practices (GAO, 2024a). To strengthen this crucial planning phase, the DoD IG has outlined several essential mitigation strategies, including enhanced pre-

solicitation risk assessments practices, mandatory CTIP training for procurement officers—developed by the CTIP PMO—and required disclosure of supply chain labor sources before award by all contractors (DoD OIG, 2019).
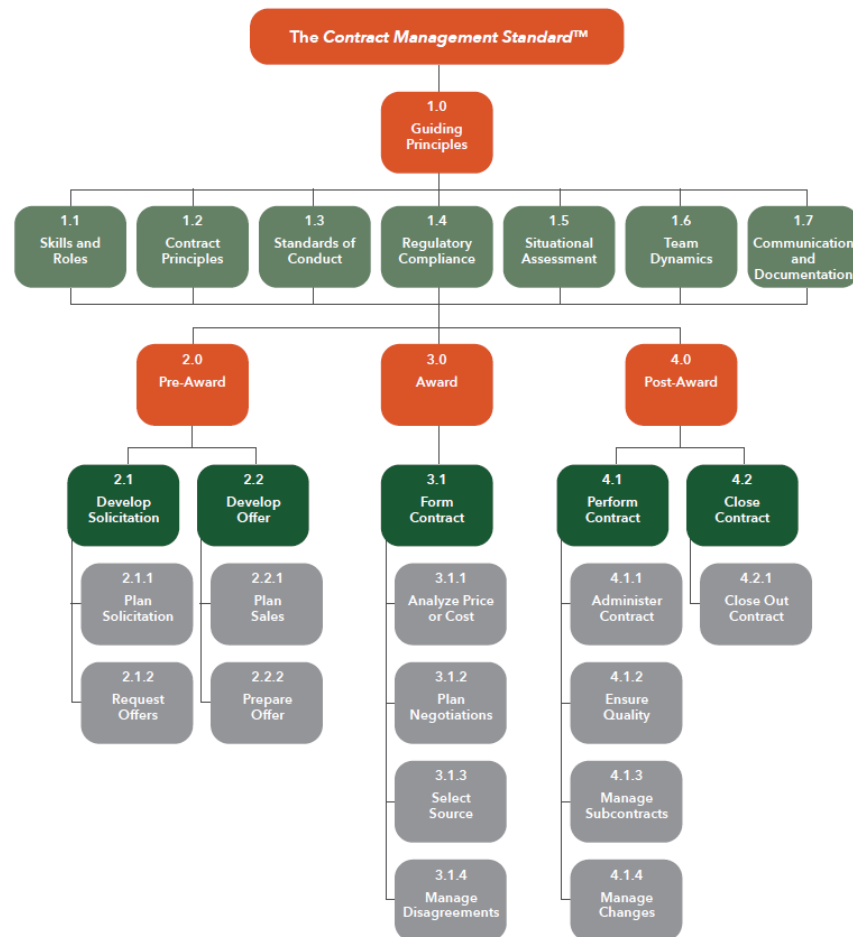
Figure 1.   NCMA Contract Management Standard. Source: NCMA (2019b).

The Award phase moves into proposal evaluation, contract term negotiation, and verification of CTIP regulation compliance. This critical transition point introduces new oversight challenges that extend into post-award monitoring. Studies have documented persistent risks during this phase, such as the selection of lowest-cost vendors without adequate labor oversight and insufficient contractor accountability for CTIP compliance plans (GAO, 2021). The State Department's assessments have identified weak transparency in subcontracting chains as a compounding factor in these challenges (State Department, 2024b). Industry experts emphasize the need for comprehensive solutions,

including mandatory third-party audits of contractor labor recruitment practices, stringent pre-award certification requirements, and risk-based contractor selection criteria (ILO, 2024).

Building on these challenges, the Post-Award phase, encompassing contract execution, compliance monitoring, and closeout, presents perhaps the most significant enforcement challenges. Field assessments from USCENTCOM highlight a critical gap: contracting officers often lack effective on-the-ground mechanisms to verify that labor conditions align with contract requirements (USCENTCOM, 2019). This enforcement challenge is exacerbated by the absence of a centralized dashboard system for tracking trafficking violations (GAO, 2024a) and inadequate grievance mechanisms for foreign laborers (Arif, 2009). Recent federal oversight recommendations emphasize the need for systematic improvements, including established CTIP compliance checkpoints and contract reviews, a unified violation tracking database—such as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) or SAM.gov—and mandatory worker outreach programs to strengthen monitoring throughout this crucial implementation phase (GAO, 2024b).

The DoD contract life cycle presents multiple opportunities to mitigate human trafficking risks, particularly in overseas labor recruitment and contract oversight. While existing policies provide a foundation for compliance, systemic gaps in monitoring and enforcement persist. Strengthening CTIP risk-integration through pre-award planning, award decisions, and post-award oversight is critical to achieving a more systematic approach to mitigating trafficking risks in DoD contracts. This comprehensive integration must prioritize enhanced enforcement mechanisms at each stage to ensure sustained compliance across the contract life cycle.

These systemic challenges underscore the need for more robust CTIP enforcement mechanisms within the Department of Defense. According to an interview with the CTIP PMO Director (2024), the PMO supports the Department's anti-trafficking efforts by developing policy guidance—such as the CTIP DoDI—and providing training tools, including checklists, field guides, acquisition resource kits, and other TIP resources designed to support on-the-ground implementation (CTIP PMO Director, personal

communication, September 25, 2024). However, responsibility for contractor policy implementation, compliance monitoring, and reporting trafficking incidents lies with contracting officers and contracting officer representatives (CORs), under the guidance of Defense Pricing, Contracting, and Acquisition Policy (DPCAP). The following section examines the CTIP PMO's role, its evolution, and the policies that shape DoD's broader anti-trafficking framework.

C. THE COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The DoD's institutional response to human trafficking risks in its operations and contracting activities is primarily coordinated through the Combating Trafficking in Persons Program Management Office (CTIP PMO). This section examines the evolution, structure, and mandate of this critical oversight body, analyzing its authorities, resources, and operational approach to preventing trafficking in defense contracts. Understanding the CTIP PMO's current capabilities and limitations provides an essential context for assessing how well the organization's processes align with ERM principles and where opportunities exist to strengthen its effectiveness in addressing forced labor risks systematically throughout the contracting life cycle.

1. The Evolution and Role of the CTIP PMO

The CTIP PMO serves as the cornerstone of DoD's anti-trafficking efforts, ensuring comprehensive compliance with federal laws, international agreements, and DoD-specific policies, including the TVPA of 2000, *Executive Order 13627* on *Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts* (2012), and *DoD Instruction 2200.01* (DoD, 2019; TVPPRA 2022). As a key component of DoD's support and promotion of the USG zero-tolerance policy on human trafficking, the CTIP PMO's mandate extends beyond basic policy framework development to actively shape and enforce directives that govern DoD contracting, procurement, and workforce training (DoD, 2019). This comprehensive approach enhances compliance with anti-trafficking regulations across contractors, service members, and civilian employees, with a particular focus on overseas contracts, where trafficking risks are more prevalent (DoD, 2014).

The CTIP PMO's evolution has been fundamentally shaped by legislative mandates, executive directives, and internal DoD policy reforms, culminating in the comprehensive DoD Strategic Plan for CTIP (2014-2018). This strategic framework established critical objectives spanning prevention, victim assistance, prosecution, and interagency coordination (DoD, 2014). However, translating strategic policies into tactical implementation has exposed significant operational challenges, particularly in identifying, managing, and mitigating forced labor risks in overseas military contract execution. Recent GAO (2024b) assessments have highlighted systemic weaknesses, including insufficient enforcement tools, inconsistent application of anti-trafficking clauses, and inadequate oversight by contracting officers. These operational gaps significantly impact the DoD's ability to implement CTIP policies effectively across the contract life cycle, underscoring the critical need for both a systematic approach to managing forced labor risks and enhanced accountability mechanisms that can strengthen operational controls at tactical and operational levels. To fully understand these challenges and their implications, it is essential to examine the historical development and institutional evolution of the CTIP PMO.

Recent evidence from Kuwait explicitly highlights the urgent necessity for the DoD to adopt a systematic and unified ERM framework to combat trafficking risks in defense procurement. Bill Lucas, a Quality Assurance Specialist from the 408th Regional Contracting Center-Kuwait, provided firsthand insights into the fragmented and reactive nature of current compliance measures, stating clearly, "While the FAR provides language that is inclusive of combating trafficking in persons, it lacks the explicit, systematic approach that ensures uniform adherence and effective enforcement across DoD operations" (CTIP PMO, 2024, p. 2). Lucas further emphasized this systematic failure in managing forced labor risks, recounting a particularly egregious instance in Kuwait where field audits revealed serious trafficking violations where he stated that, "Violations discovered included non-payment of wages, forced overtime, food deprivation, threats, physical abuse, confinement, withholding passports and identification documents, and much more. In one inspection in Saudi Arabia, I found no CTIP certification clause, no compliance plan, no awareness program, and inadequate housing" (CTIP PMO, 2024, p. 2).

Such explicit failures illustrate the significant compliance gaps inherent in the existing reactive and fragmented enforcement framework. The absence of a clearly defined, structured ERM-based compliance mechanism results in recurring vulnerabilities that undermine the effectiveness of DoD's anti-trafficking measures. These documented examples substantiate the thesis's rationale for adopting the structured principles outlined in the OMB ERM framework Circular A-123, moving towards proactive identification, assessment, mitigation, and continuous monitoring of trafficking risks throughout the defense procurement life cycle.

a.   *Establishment and Evolution of the CTIP PMO*

The establishment of the CTIP PMO in 2006 aligns with the broader federal efforts to combat trafficking in persons, reflecting legislative mandates and executive directives that required federal agencies to implement stricter anti-trafficking measures (DoD, 2021). The TVPA of 2000 was the first major legislative step in formalizing a federal framework for combating trafficking, mandating coordinated efforts in prevention, protection, and prosecution (TVPPRA, 2022). This legislation laid the foundation for subsequent executive actions. In response to concerns about the vulnerabilities of foreign workers on U.S. government contracts, particularly in contingency environments, President Obama issued *Executive Order 13627* (2012), reinforcing contractor compliance requirements and introducing stricter enforcement mechanisms within federal procurement activities (DoD, 2014). The White House's National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Human Trafficking (2021) further emphasized interagency coordination and enhanced reporting mechanisms to ensure a unified federal response (The White House, 2021). Despite a strong strategic framework, the absence of a standardized enforcement mechanism has led to decentralized oversight, shifting significant responsibility to individual agencies and contracting officials. This fragmented approach has resulted in inconsistencies in identifying and mitigating human trafficking risks across DoD contracts (GAO, 2024b).

Recognizing the need to translate these legislative and executive mandates into an institutionalized enforcement mechanism, the DoD formally established the CTIP PMO in 2006. Through DoD Instruction 2200.01, the office was tasked with codifying CTIP

program responsibilities, training mandates, and enforcement mechanisms (DoD, 2019). This directive positioned the CTIP PMO as the Department's primary oversight authority for ensuring compliance with anti-trafficking policies across all DoD contracts and operations. Building on this foundation, the DoD Strategic Plan for CTIP (2014-2018) established four strategic objectives: strengthening prevention measures, expanding victim assistance programs, increasing prosecution capabilities, and fostering interagency coordination (DoD, 2014). However, despite this comprehensive policy framework, significant challenges persist in translating CTIP policies from strategic guidance into operational and tactical enforcement. These implementation gaps are particularly evident in overseas service contracts, including construction and food services, where monitoring and compliance weaknesses have been well-documented.

A 2014 GAO investigation revealed widespread recruitment fee exploitation in DoD contracts, illustrating the severe consequences of weak enforcement mechanisms. The report documented that in one contract alone, nearly 1,900 of 10,000 foreign workers reported paying recruitment fees averaging $3,000—equivalent to five months' wages—to secure employment on U.S. government contracts, creating conditions for potential debt bondage (GAO, 2014, p. 16). More recent assessments indicate that these systemic issues persist, with GAO (2024a) identifying significant compliance inconsistencies across military branches and contracting offices. These gaps in oversight, risk identification, monitoring, and enforcement continue to impede the full implementation of CTIP PMO policies within DoD overseas contracts. These persistent challenges highlight the critical need for stronger accountability measures, improved monitoring mechanisms, and more rigorous enforcement efforts to ensure CTIP policies are effectively implemented across all levels of the DoD contracting operations.

2. Responsibilities and Oversight Functions of the CTIP PMO

The CTIP PMO operates under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD [P&R]) through the Department of Defense Human Resources Activity (DODHRA) and is tasked with implementing and overseeing compliance with DoD Instruction 2200.01, which establishes the DoD's policies for combating trafficking in persons (DoD, 2019). While USD (P&R) issues and

updates DoDI 2200.01, the CTIP PMO serves as the implementing entity, responsible for ensuring that DoD components adhere to anti-trafficking policies and training requirements (DoD, 2019). Although these efforts aim to institutionalize anti-trafficking measures across DoD contracts and operations, current oversight mechanisms remain fragmented and lack a unified, systematic risk management framework to identify, assess, and mitigate trafficking risks across the contract life cycle (GAO, 2024b).

The CTIP PMO fulfills its mandate through five key functional areas: policy implementation and compliance oversight, training and awareness programs, compliance monitoring and reporting, task force coordination and interagency engagement, and enforcement and accountability measures.

a. Policy Implementation and Compliance Oversight

The CTIP PMO is responsible for implementing and overseeing compliance with DoDI 2200.01, which mandates training, reporting mechanisms, and anti-trafficking compliance measures across the DoD (DoD, 2019). This instruction aligns with National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 22, reinforcing a USG "zero-tolerance" policy on trafficking across all federal agencies (The White House, 2002). Additionally, the CTIP PMO integrates CTIP requirements into contracting processes, workforce policies, and military regulations (CTIP PMO, 2014). However, enforcement challenges persist due to the absence of a standardized, enterprise-wide compliance mechanism, leaving policy adherence largely dependent on individual contracting offices and military components (GAO, 2024b).

b. Training and Awareness Programs

The CTIP PMO administers mandatory CTIP training programs for military personnel, DoD civilians, and contractors as required by DoDI 2200.01 (DoD, 2019). These programs educate personnel on identifying trafficking indicators, reporting violations, and complying with legal requirements (CTIP PMO, 2014). Specialized training exists for law enforcement professionals, acquisition personnel, legal counsel, and DoD Education Activity (DODEA) personnel (DoD, 2019). Additionally, the CTIP PMO distributes multilingual educational materials, including posters and worker's rights

wallet cards, to foreign laborers employed under DoD contracts (DoD, 2020b). Despite these efforts, training effectiveness is difficult to measure due to the lack of a centralized system to track compliance rates and assess personnel proficiency in identifying trafficking risks (GAO, 2024b).

c.   Compliance Monitoring and Reporting

To ensure adherence to DoDI 2200.01, the CTIP PMO requires DoD components to conduct annual self-assessments that evaluate policy implementation, training completion rates, and contractor compliance (DoD, 2019). The CTIP PMO also coordinates with the DOS and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to report CTIP-related enforcement data (DoD, 2019). However, GAO (2024a) reports that the current system lacks standardized enforcement metrics, resulting in inconsistent monitoring and accountability across military branches and contracting offices. A systematic risk-based approach, integrating ERM principles from *OMB Circular A-123*, could enhance compliance effectiveness by standardizing oversight processes and identifying vulnerabilities in DoD contracts (GAO, 2024b).

d.   Task Force Coordination and Interagency Engagement

The CTIP Task Force, chaired by the CTIP Program Manager, facilitates interagency collaboration and policy coordination across DoD agencies (CTIP PMO, 2014). The task force includes representatives from the Joint Staff, Military Services, Combatant Commands, DoD General Counsel, and other key agencies (DoD, 2019). Its primary functions include identifying gaps in enforcement, recommending policy updates, and ensuring DoD's alignment with broader federal anti-trafficking strategies (The White House, 2021). However, the task force lacks a formalized enterprise-wide framework for systematically assessing and managing trafficking risks in contracts, leading to inconsistent implementation across DoD components (GAO, 2024b).

e.   Enforcement and Accountability Measures

The CTIP PMO collaborates with contracting agencies and the DoD IG to audit compliance, investigate violations, and impose penalties for trafficking-related infractions (GAO, 2024a). Contractors found in violation of CTIP provisions may face criminal

penalties, suspension, debarment, or contract termination (DoD, 2019). Despite these enforcement measures, GAO (2024b) highlights deficiencies in risk assessment protocols, decentralized reporting mechanisms, and inconsistent contractor accountability practices. Addressing these deficiencies requires a structured, risk-based compliance framework that systematically evaluates trafficking risks at each stage of the contract life cycle (GAO, 2024b).

3. Challenges and the Need for a Systematic Approach

Despite the CTIP PMO's oversight responsibilities, significant enforcement gaps persist in managing trafficking risks across DoD contracts at the tactical levels (GAO, 2024a). The lack of a standardized, enterprise-wide framework for identifying and mitigating human trafficking risks hinders the effective implementation of anti-trafficking measures (DoD, 2019). As GAO (2024a) points out, DoD's reliance on fragmented oversight mechanisms results in inconsistent enforcement, particularly in overseas contingency contracts where trafficking risks are highest. To address these deficiencies, a systematic risk management framework—integrating principles from the OMB ERM framework Circular A-123—is necessary to ensure that anti-trafficking measures are embedded across all phases of the DoD contract execution, from pre-award planning to post-award compliance monitoring (GAO, 2024b).

D. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This research is grounded in two complementary theoretical frameworks that together provide a comprehensive foundation for addressing human trafficking risks in DoD contracting. The first framework builds upon established anti-trafficking policy measures that define the U.S. government's approach to combating trafficking in persons. The second framework leverages the structured methodology of ERM as outlined in *OMB Circular A-123*. While anti-trafficking policy establishes the moral and legal imperatives that guide the USG's zero-tolerance stance, ERM provides the systematic approach necessary for effective implementation. Together, these frameworks address both the "what" and the "how" of managing human trafficking risks in DoD contracting, enabling the development of actionable recommendations that bridge the documented

gaps between policy intentions and operational outcomes. This integrated theoretical approach directly supports the central research question of how the DoD can systematically manage human trafficking risks throughout the contract life cycle.

The following subsections examine these two theoretical frameworks in detail, first exploring the established anti-trafficking policy approach that defines what must be accomplished and then analyzing the ERM methodology that provides the structured approach for how to accomplish it. After establishing each framework independently, the discussion demonstrates their integration, addressing the research gap through a practical application to human trafficking risks in defense contracts. The section concludes with specific examples of how this integrated framework can be systematically implemented across the DoD contracting life cycle—from pre-award planning through post-award monitoring—providing a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the solutions proposed in subsequent chapters.

1.   Anti-Trafficking Policy Framework (3P/4P Approach)

The U.S. government's anti-trafficking approach is structured around the "3P" paradigm—prevention, protection, and prosecution—initially established by the TVPA of 2000 (DoD, 2019). This foundational framework guides federal agencies in their efforts to combat human trafficking through systematic prevention initiatives, victim protection measures, and enforcement actions against perpetrators (TVPPRA, 2022). In recent years, the government, including the DoD, has expanded this model to include a fourth "P"— partnership—which underscores the importance of coordinated action with various stakeholders (The White House, 2021). These measures articulate the U.S. government's categorical commitment to a zero-tolerance policy toward human trafficking, officially mandated by the NSPD-22 issued in 2002 (DoD OIG, 2019).

Practically, this policy requires the DoD to proactively prevent trafficking through rigorous awareness programs and robust oversight mechanisms, protect potential victims (such as overseas workers employed on DoD contracts), and prosecute or hold accountable those who facilitate or neglect trafficking activities. Forced labor, a central aspect of human trafficking, is notably prevalent in overseas military contracting, generating billions of dollars annually and disproportionately impacting vulnerable

groups (Faruk, Ibrahim, & Danjuma, 2023; Ribando, 2007). Despite these clear mandates and robust legislation, researchers highlight significant gaps in enforcement and practical application, including insufficient compliance checks, inadequate contractor accountability, and jurisdictional loopholes—particularly concerning Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) (GAO, 2021; Hoots, 2019). Recent legislative efforts reinforce the importance of rigorous monitoring and accountability in federal anti-trafficking initiatives, emphasizing enhanced reporting and compliance measures (Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act [TVPPRA], 2023). Yet, these policy declarations alone remain insufficient, necessitating stronger enforcement mechanisms and structured frameworks to bridge implementation gaps (Hoots, 2019).

2. Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework (OMB Cir. A-123)

To address the implementation gaps in anti-trafficking policy, this thesis employs the OMB ERM framework as its central theoretical framework. Outlined in Circular A-123 and revised in 2016, this framework provides federal agencies with a structured and holistic methodology for systematically identifying, assessing, and managing risks across organizational boundaries (Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, 2020). Unlike traditional compliance-focused approaches, ERM conceptualizes risks as an interconnected portfolio requiring integrated management with clearly defined ownership, proactive responses, and ongoing monitoring and reporting of risks rather than siloed treatment of individual risks (Chief Financial Officers Council [CFOC], 2016).

One of the most useful documents to align the OMB ERM framework to the DoD's CTIP operations is the ERM Playbook by the CFOC (2016). The ERM Playbook offers practical guidance, step-by-step procedures, and actionable tools that are designed to assist federal agencies in applying ERM concepts to a range of operating environments. Neither *OMB Circular A-123* nor the ERM Playbook addresses human trafficking explicitly, but both frameworks offer rigorous approaches that can be easily applied to manage and mitigate human trafficking risks within the context of the DoD procurement operations (CFOC, 2016).

Figure 2 illustrates the Essential Elements of Federal Government Enterprise Risk Management as identified by GAO (2024b). This cyclical process begins with aligning ERM efforts to agency mission objectives, followed by a methodical progression through risk identification, assessment, response selection, and continuous monitoring. At the center of this model is effective communication with stakeholders—an element particularly critical when addressing complex risks like human trafficking that span organizational and jurisdictional boundaries. Each component of this cycle offers specific value for managing trafficking risks (GAO, 2024b):

- **Align ERM with Goals:** Connects anti-trafficking efforts to core DoD missions and objectives
- **Identify Risks:** Systematically catalogs trafficking vulnerabilities across contract types and locations
- **Assess Risks:** Evaluates both likelihood and potential impact of trafficking violations
- **Select Risk Response:** Determines appropriate strategies (acceptance, avoidance, reduction, or sharing)
- **Monitor Risks:** Establishes metrics and feedback mechanisms to track effectiveness of controls
- **Communicate and Report:** Ensures transparency and information sharing with relevant stakeholders

The figure shows a circular diagram with "Essential Elements of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)" at the center, surrounded by steps:

- **Align ERM process to goals and objectives** — Ensure the ERM process maximizes the achievement of agency mission and results.
- **Identify Risks** — Assemble a comprehensive list of risks, both threats and opportunities, that could affect the agency from achieving its goals and objectives.
- **Assess Risks** — Examine risks, considering both the likelihood of the risk and the impact of the risk on the agency mission.
- **Select Risk Response** — Select the response (based on risk tolerance): acceptance, avoidance, reduction, share/transfer, or maximize opportunity.
- **Monitor Risks** — Monitor how risks are changing and if responses are successful.
- **Communicate and Report on Risks** — Communicate risks to stakeholders and report on the status of addressing the risks.

Figure 2.   Essential Elements of Federal Government Enterprise Risk Management. Source: GAO (2024b).

The practical application of ERM to CTIP represents a fundamental shift from reactive, checklist-based compliance toward proactive, risk-informed management. As explicitly encouraged in a 2019 OMB memorandum, agencies should "understand their TIP [Trafficking in Persons] risk profiles" and explicitly incorporate anti-trafficking measures into their ERM processes by systematically reviewing spending patterns and existing safeguards in high-risk areas (OMB, 2019). This approach enables the DoD to strategically identify high-risk contracts, activities, or geographic regions and allocate oversight resources accordingly, rather than applying a uniform level of scrutiny across all contracting activities regardless of risk.

Figure 3 demonstrates how risk identification methodology is already employed within the DoD acquisition contexts, specifically for large weapon systems programs (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Engineering, 2017). This diagram illustrates a comprehensive approach to risk identification that includes understanding the

nature of requirements, employing multiple identification methodologies (independent assessments, stakeholder requirements, brainstorming sessions, interviews), and conducting thorough analyses of technical performance measures. While currently applied primarily to technical and programmatic risks in weapons acquisition (cost, schedule, performance), these same structured practices could be effectively adapted to identify human trafficking risks within the DoD's service contracting portfolio. For example, the model's emphasis on "brainstorming sessions with SMEs" and "interviews with IPT leads" could be modified to incorporate anti-trafficking specialists and local labor compliance experts in high-risk regions.
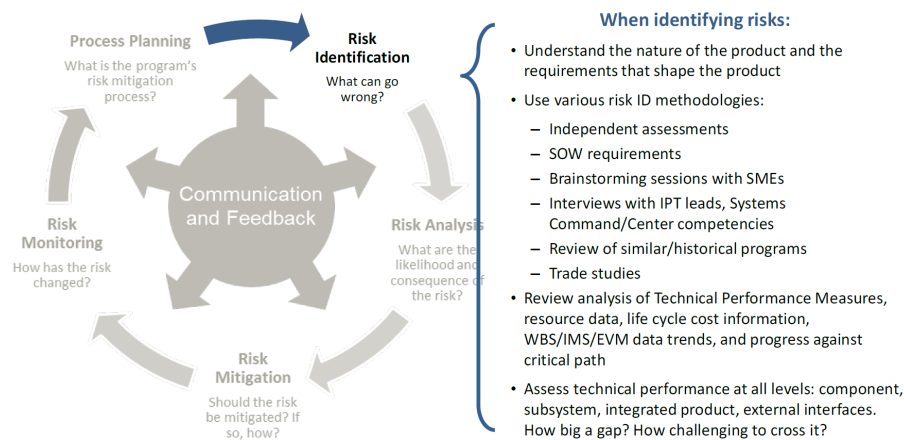
Figure 3.   An Example of a Risk Identification Step in a Large Weapon System Program. Source: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Engineering (2017).

The ERM framework provides particularly valuable structure for managing human trafficking risks because it emphasizes ongoing, cyclical assessment rather than point-in-time compliance checks. This approach acknowledges that trafficking risks evolve over time as contractors adapt their practices, regional conditions change, and new vulnerabilities emerge. By implementing a structured ERM approach, the DoD could move beyond reactive responses to trafficking violations toward a more comprehensive understanding of how these risks manifest throughout the contract life cycle and across different operational environments.

3. Cultural Considerations in ERM Implementation

Successful ERM implementation, as detailed explicitly in Circular A-123 (2016), depends heavily on the establishment and cultivation of an open and transparent organizational culture:

> Successful implementation of this Circular requires Agencies to establish and foster an open, transparent culture that encourages people to communicate information about potential risks and other concerns with their superiors without fear of retaliation or blame. Similarly, agency managers, Inspectors General (IG) and other auditors should establish a new set of parameters encouraging the free flow of information about agency risk points and corrective measure adoption. An open and transparent culture results in the earlier identification of risk, allowing the opportunity to develop a collaborative response, ultimately leading to a more resilient government (p. ii).

This cultural dimension underscores that effective ERM is not merely procedural but relies fundamentally on human factors and organizational values. Transparent risk communication enables early identification and collaborative mitigation, essential in managing complex and often hidden risks like human trafficking. Within the DoD specifically, cultural barriers to effective risk communication include the hierarchical command structure that may discourage upward reporting, operational pressures that prioritize mission accomplishment over labor oversight, and organizational compartmentalization that fragments responsibility for trafficking risk management across multiple stakeholders (Morris et al., 2021; GAO, 2021).

Morris et al. (2021) emphasize that contracting officers and commanders often prioritize cost, deadlines, and security over deeper engagement with labor trafficking risks, noting that such concerns typically receive attention only after public scandals or high-visibility incidents. GAO (2021) further reports that personnel frequently experience confusion over reporting roles, lack of clarity regarding enforcement expectations, and fear of retaliation or blame—factors that directly undermine transparent risk communication. As stated in an interview with the DoD CTIP PMO Director (2024), DODHRA continues to engage with the DoD ERM and Internal Control Working Group, a collaboration that reflects growing recognition of the need to embed CTIP

considerations into broader risk governance efforts and to promote a culture of transparency, shared accountability, and cross-functional coordination.

4. Gaps in Current ERM Applications to Human Trafficking

While ERM has been successfully implemented in various federal management areas, current applications within DoD procurement have largely overlooked the systematic incorporation of human trafficking risks—particularly in overseas construction and service contracts (Morris et al., 2021; Hoots, 2019). This omission represents a significant gap, as traditional risk management frameworks within DoD acquisition (such as those for large weapon systems) have robust methodologies but are rarely applied to human trafficking issues despite the strategic, operational, and reputational risks they pose (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Engineering, 2017).

5. Integration of Anti-Trafficking Policy and ERM: Addressing the Research Gap

Integrating traditional anti-trafficking policy (3P/4P framework) with the structured, systematic ERM approach provided by Circular A-123 offers a comprehensive theoretical foundation for this study. This combined framework addresses the implementation gaps clearly identified in prior research. It leverages ERM's structured, proactive, and data-driven methodologies to directly target known vulnerabilities in trafficking management, improve oversight, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and enhance DoD's ability to fulfill its anti-trafficking mandate effectively. By explicitly connecting these two theoretical approaches, the research provides a pathway for transforming DoD's existing fragmented anti-trafficking activities into a coherent, effective, risk-informed management system—thereby addressing the research questions and directly responding to identified gaps.

6. Example Application: Applying the OMB ERM Framework to Human Trafficking Risks in Defense Contracting

To illustrate how the integration of anti-trafficking policy and enterprise risk management can be operationalized, this section presents a practical application of the

OMB Circular A-123 ERM framework to trafficking risks in overseas construction services contracts. This example demonstrates how the DoD could transform its current fragmented compliance efforts into a comprehensive risk management system, particularly for high-risk environments such as the USCENTCOM AOR. This framework is expanded upon in Chapter IV of this study, where a detailed implementation model is presented as part of the proposed solution.

The following subsections describe the six core phases of the ERM framework as applied to trafficking risks in defense contracts. Each phase builds upon the previous one to create a comprehensive risk management cycle: first identifying potential trafficking vulnerabilities, then systematically assessing their severity, prioritizing risks based on impact and likelihood, developing tailored mitigation strategies, implementing continuous monitoring mechanisms, and finally establishing effective communication protocols. Together, these phases transform fragmented compliance activities into an integrated risk management approach that addresses trafficking threats throughout the contract life cycle.

a. Risk Identification

The initial phase involves systematically cataloging all potential trafficking vulnerabilities throughout the procurement process and contractors' supply chain. For construction contracts in USCENTCOM, this comprehensive risk identification process includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Supply Chain Mapping:** Identify all contractors, subcontractors, and labor recruitment agencies in USCENTCOM construction projects
- **Vulnerability Assessment:** Analyze which countries/regions within USCENTCOM have the highest trafficking risk profiles
- **Data Collection:** Gather information on labor practices, recruitment methods, and living conditions of workers
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Consult with NGOs, local authorities, and human rights organizations active in the region
- **Red Flag Detection:** Develop indicators of potential trafficking situations (passport confiscation, wage withholding, excessive fees)

By systematically identifying these risk factors, DoD contracting officials can develop a comprehensive understanding of potential trafficking vulnerabilities before they manifest in actual violations.

b.   *Risk Assessment*

Once trafficking risks are identified, they must be systematically evaluated to determine their severity and potential impact across multiple dimensions. This assessment process would require the following:

- **Risk Criteria Development:** Create metrics specific to trafficking risks in construction environments
- **Likelihood Assessment:** Evaluate probability of trafficking occurring based on country risk indices, contractor history, and nature of work
- **Impact Assessment:** Determine potential consequences (humanitarian, operational, reputational, legal) of trafficking incidents
- **Risk Characterization:** Document trafficking risk profile for each project/contractor
- **Interdependency Analysis:** Identify how trafficking risks connect to other security and operational risks

This multidimensional assessment provides a foundation for informed decision-making about resource allocation and intervention priorities.

c.   *Risk Evaluation/Prioritization*

With a comprehensive assessment completed, the DoD can effectively prioritize its limited oversight resources based on risk severity and organizational risk tolerance. This prioritization process includes, but is not limited to, the following, as part of the evaluation:

- **Risk Ranking:** Categorize contractors/projects by trafficking risk level (high/medium/low)
- **Threshold Setting:** Establish risk tolerance thresholds for trafficking indicators
- **Resource Allocation:** Determine which risks require immediate intervention vs. monitoring
- **Portfolio View:** Create a comprehensive risk portfolio across all USCENTCOM construction activities
- **Prioritization Matrix:** Develop a decision framework for addressing the most critical trafficking risks first

This strategic prioritization ensures that limited oversight resources are deployed where they can have the greatest impact in preventing trafficking violations.

d. Risk Response/Mitigation

Developing appropriate responses to identified risks requires a mix of preventive and detective controls tailored to specific risk profiles. For construction contracts in USCENTCOM, effective mitigation strategies may include the following:

- **Contract Requirements:** Incorporate specific anti-trafficking clauses and compliance mechanisms
- **Verification Processes:** Implement worker interview protocols and unannounced site inspections
- **Training Programs:** Develop contractor and DoD personnel training on trafficking indicators
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish protected channels for workers to report abuses
- **Remediation Procedures:** Create response protocols for addressing identified trafficking cases
- **Due Diligence Enhancement:** Strengthen pre-award contractor vetting focused on labor practices

These targeted interventions address specific vulnerabilities while creating a comprehensive framework for prevention and response.

e. Risk Monitoring

Unlike point-in-time compliance checks, effective risk management requires continuous monitoring and reassessment throughout the contract life cycle. Critical monitoring activities could include the following:

- **Performance Metrics:** Track key risk indicators for trafficking (recruitment practices, living conditions)
- **Regular Assessments:** Conduct periodic reassessments of contractor compliance
- **Continuous Feedback:** Maintain open channels with workers and local communities
- **Incident Tracking:** Document and analyze any trafficking-related incidents or near-misses
- **Trend Analysis:** Monitor patterns across contractors and locations to identify systemic issues

This ongoing monitoring creates a dynamic risk management approach that adapts to changing conditions and emerging threats.

f. Risk Communication and Reporting

Effective information sharing ensures that trafficking risks are visible to decision-makers and that prevention strategies are consistently implemented. Key communication elements may include the following:

- **Standardized Reporting:** Develop consistent reporting formats for trafficking risks
- **Information Sharing:** Establish protocols for sharing risk information across DoD components
- **Contractor Communication:** Create clear guidance documents for contractors on expectations
- **Leadership Briefings:** Provide regular updates to senior leadership on trafficking risk posture
- **Interagency Coordination:** Share information with the State Department's TIP office and other relevant agencies

This comprehensive communication strategy ensures that trafficking risks remain visible to leadership and that prevention efforts are coordinated across organizational boundaries.

This systematic application of ERM principles to human trafficking risks demonstrates how the DoD could transform its current compliance-based approach into a comprehensive, risk-informed management system. By adapting established risk methodologies already used in other DoD contexts, the Department can more effectively fulfill its anti-trafficking mandate in high-risk overseas environments while efficiently allocating its limited oversight resources. Chapter IV will expand this conceptual framework into a detailed implementation model specifically tailored to DoD's CTIP program and overseas construction contracting operations.

7. Practical Application: Integrating OMB ERM throughout the DoD Contracting Life Cycle

While the previous section outlined the core components of an ERM approach to trafficking risks, this section demonstrates how these principles can be systematically applied throughout the DoD contracting life cycle. This life cycle-based approach aligns trafficking risk management with established acquisition processes, making implementation more intuitive for contracting professionals. The following framework illustrates how trafficking risk management can be integrated into each phase of the

contracting process, creating a comprehensive approach that spans from initial market research through contract closeout. This approach will be further developed in Chapter IV as part of the proposed implementation model.

The following sections organize trafficking risk management activities across the three phases of the DoD contracting life cycle: pre-award, award, and post-award. Within each phase, specific ERM activities are mapped to contracting functions, demonstrating how trafficking risk considerations can be systematically integrated into existing contracting processes. For each phase, the framework identifies specific risk management actions that align with standard contracting procedures, enabling contracting officials to embed anti-trafficking controls within familiar operational contexts. This life cycle approach ensures comprehensive coverage of trafficking risks from initial planning through contract closeout while maintaining alignment with established contracting processes.

a.   Pre-Award Phase

During the pre-award phase, trafficking risks must be proactively identified and addressed before contractual commitments are established. This early intervention creates the foundation for effective risk management throughout the contract life cycle.

(1)   Risk Identification:

- Conduct country-specific human trafficking risk assessments for targeted USCENTCOM locations
- Review potential contractors' past performance on labor practices and human rights
- Analyze supply chain structures and labor recruitment methods
- Identify high-risk construction activities that frequently involve migrant labor
- Map potential subcontractor networks and labor sourcing patterns

(2)   Risk Assessment:

- Evaluate contractors' existing human trafficking prevention policies and practices
- Assess labor recruitment fee practices and documentation verification procedures
- Review living condition standards and wage payment systems
- Rate potential contractors on trafficking risk using a standardized scoring matrix

- Consider project location vulnerability factors (proximity to conflict zones, labor law enforcement)

      (3)   Risk Response Planning:

- Develop tailored anti-trafficking provisions for solicitation documents
- Create mandatory contractor certification requirements for labor practices
- Design appropriate monitoring and inspection rights language
- Establish trafficking-specific performance metrics and reporting requirements
- Determine go/no-go thresholds for trafficking risk levels

      By integrating these activities into the pre-award phase, DoD contracting officials can identify high-risk contractors before kicking off the award phase and establish contractual provisions that mitigate identified risks.

b.   *Award Phase*

      The award phase represents a critical decision point where trafficking risk considerations must be explicitly incorporated into source selection and contract formation decisions.

      (1)   Risk Prioritization:

- Incorporate trafficking risk ratings into source selection evaluation criteria
- Weight trafficking prevention capabilities according to best value determinations
- Compare competing contractors' trafficking risk management approaches
- Evaluate proposed subcontractor management plans for trafficking risks
- Determine acceptable risk tolerance levels based on mission criticality

      (2)   Risk Response Implementation:

- Include robust anti-trafficking FAR/DFARS clauses with enhanced monitoring provisions
- Incorporate contractor's trafficking prevention plan as contract deliverable
- Establish clear performance requirements for worker recruitment, housing, and treatment
- Implement progressive consequence structure for compliance failures
- Create financial incentives for exceeding trafficking prevention standards

      (3)   Risk Communication:

- Conduct post-award orientation focused on trafficking prevention expectations

- Provide contractor training on trafficking indicators and reporting procedures
- Establish clear lines of communication for trafficking concerns
- Document trafficking risk mitigation responsibilities in contract administration plans
- Brief all stakeholders on trafficking risk profile and management approach

These award-phase activities establish clear expectations and accountability mechanisms that set the stage for effective post-award oversight.

c.   *Post-Award Phase*

The post-award phase requires ongoing vigilance to ensure that anti-trafficking requirements are consistently implemented throughout contract performance.

(1)   Risk Monitoring:

- Implement regular unannounced site inspections focused on labor conditions
- Conduct confidential worker interviews in native languages
- Review payroll records and recruitment documentation
- Track key performance indicators for trafficking risk factors
- Establish protected whistleblower channels for workers

(2)   Ongoing Risk Assessment:

- Perform quarterly trafficking risk reassessments for all projects/contracts
- Update risk profiles based on changing conditions or incidents
- Evaluate effectiveness of implemented controls
- Identify emerging trafficking trends or methods
- Reassess subcontractor and labor supplier relationships regularly

(3)   Adaptive Risk Response:

- Implement corrective action plans for identified compliance issues
- Adjust monitoring frequency based on risk indicators
- Enforce contract remedies for trafficking violations (from cure notices to termination)
- Document lessons learned for future contract actions
- Share best practices and successful interventions across USCENTCOM contracts

(4)   Risk Reporting:

- Maintain centralized tracking of trafficking risk indicators across contracts
- Provide regular status updates to leadership on trafficking risk posture

- Document trafficking prevention outcomes in contractor performance assessments
- Report potential trafficking violations through appropriate channels
- Analyze trends to inform future procurement strategies

This life cycle-based approach would transform anti-trafficking efforts from a static compliance exercise into a dynamic risk-management process integrated throughout the DoD's established acquisition procedures. By aligning trafficking risk management with familiar contracting processes, this approach would enhance both implementation feasibility and operational effectiveness. Chapter IV will expand on this framework to provide specific implementation guidance tailored to the unique operational environment of overseas construction services in the USCENTCOM AOR.

E.   CURRENT REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The DoD operates within a complex legal and regulatory environment designed to combat human trafficking in federal contracting. This section examines the evolution of anti-trafficking regulations affecting DoD operations, from foundational legislation to specific contractor requirements and enforcement mechanisms. Through this analysis, a pattern emerges of robust policy intentions undermined by persistent implementation gaps, highlighting the need for a more systematic approach to managing trafficking risks throughout the contract life cycle in DoD contracts, particularly during overseas operations.

1.   Foundational Legislation and Directives

Over the past two decades, a comprehensive framework of U.S. laws, regulations, and policies has evolved to combat trafficking in persons, particularly as it relates to federal contracting and DoD operations which shaped the DoD's CTIP PMO practices. At the foundation of this regulatory environment is the TVPA of 2000 and its subsequent reauthorizations, which establish a whole-of-government approach and criminalize human trafficking. As detailed in Appendix B, Table 10, the evolution of anti-trafficking legislation from the TVPA of 2000 through current requirements demonstrates the progressive strengthening of federal contracting oversight mechanisms. These statutes institutionalized the "3P" paradigm—prevention, protection, and prosecution—and mandated annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Reports that rank countries' efforts to

combat trafficking, thereby signaling U.S. global anti-trafficking priorities (DoD, 2019). Complementing the TVPA, the 2002 NSPD-22 explicitly required federal departments, including the DoD, to adopt the USG zero-tolerance stance toward trafficking associated with U.S. military and contractor activities overseas (DoD OIG, 2019).

Despite this robust legislative foundation, GAO (2024b) found that these high-level directives have not consistently translated into operational enforcement, with trafficking violations continuing to occur in overseas DoD contracts due to inadequate implementation of these policy frameworks at the tactical level. This implementation gap is further illustrated in the DoD CTIP Newsletter (2024), which documents that "over the past two decades, the U.S. Military has outsourced its overseas base-support responsibilities to operate military facilities to private contractors" resulting in hundreds of thousands of "Other Country Nationals" working on U.S. military installations, many subjected to "harsh working and living conditions, with pay as little as $150 per month for 12-hour days, no time off, and no communication with the outside world" (p. 4).

In response, the DoD established internal policy through *DoD Instruction (DoDI) 2200.01*, "Combating Trafficking in Persons," first issued in 2007, updated comprehensively in 2015, and revised again in 2019. This DoDI defines clear CTIP roles and responsibilities across the DoD components, mandates standardized training and requires annual reporting and self-assessment processes by each component to the CTIP PMO on CTIP program implementation (DoD, 2023). These self-assessments serve to identify strengths, address compliance weaknesses, and ensure continuous improvement, making clear that CTIP oversight remains an ongoing command responsibility subject to internal and external audits, including those conducted by the DoD IG (DoD, 2023). However, Morris et al. (2021) identified significant inconsistencies in how different DoD components implement these self-assessment requirements, with many assessments focusing on procedural compliance rather than substantive outcomes, resulting in a false sense of security regarding trafficking prevention efforts. The DoD CTIP Newsletter (2024) reinforces this concern, concluding that to effectively combat trafficking, "there needs to be a 'you must and you shall' for CTIP duties and representatives because compliance is not clearly defined" and that "nothing can replace boots on the ground" with regular inspections and audits (p. 2).

2.   Defense-Specific Anti-Trafficking Regulations

A pivotal development occurred with the NDAA for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, specifically Title XVII: "Ending Trafficking in Government Contracting." This legislation significantly strengthened anti-trafficking obligations for federal contractors, resulting in comprehensive updates to the FAR and DFARS. NDAA FY2013 1701–1708 mandated that all federal contracts explicitly include anti-trafficking clauses and detailed specific preventative measures for contractors. The act expanded prohibited practices beyond forced labor and sex trafficking to include confiscating employees' identity documents, charging recruitment fees, engaging in fraudulent recruitment, and providing substandard living conditions in contractor-provided housing (NDAA, 2013; DoD, 2019). While this legislation marked substantial progress, the DoD OIG (2019) discovered that contracting officers frequently failed to include these mandatory clauses in contracts executed in Kuwait, highlighting a critical compliance gap between regulatory requirements and actual contract execution in high-risk environments. The CTIP Newsletter (2024) also provides concrete evidence of this ongoing implementation failure, documenting a recent spot-check in Saudi Arabia that found "the contractor had over a dozen human trafficking violations of Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 22.17 including: No CTIP certification clause in the contract" (p. 1).

These prohibitions were incorporated into FAR 52.222-50, *Combating Trafficking in Persons*, a mandatory contract clause for all federal solicitations and contracts. As updated in 2015, FAR 52.222-50 requires that contractors (and their subcontractors at all tiers) "shall not" engage in any of the enumerated trafficking-related activities and must take affirmative steps to prevent such activities (OMB, 2019). The FAR clause also obligates contractors to report any credible information about trafficking violations and to cooperate with government investigations (Defense Contract Management Agency [DCMA], 2021). Nevertheless, GAO (2021) found that contractor self-reporting of violations remains exceedingly rare, with most violations identified through external sources or whistleblowers rather than the mandated self-disclosure mechanisms, indicating that the reporting requirements lack effective enforcement mechanisms. This reporting failure is explicitly confirmed in the DoD CTIP Newsletter (2024), which notes that in Saudi Arabia "the contractor did not report CTIP violations to DoD IG, even

though violations were observed during spot-check (expired passports, unpaid employees, employee contracts lacking proper language)" (p. 2).

3. Contractor Requirements and Compliance Measures

Additionally, the regulations introduced by NDAA FY2013 and *Executive Order (EO) 13627* (issued in 2012 to reinforce anti-trafficking in federal contracting) go beyond trafficking measures to require certain contractors to implement a compliance plan. For example, under the FAR and DFARS rules, any contract for supplies (other than commercially off-the-shelf items) or services to be performed abroad exceeding $550,000 must have a compliance plan in place and an annual certification that neither the contractor nor its employees or subcontractors are engaging in trafficking (FAR, 2025b). The compliance plan must include, at minimum, the following: an awareness program for employees, a process for employees to report trafficking violations without fear of retaliation, a recruitment and wage plan that only permits the use of licensed recruitment firms and prohibits charging employees recruitment fees, and a housing plan that ensures any provided housing meets host-country safety standards (DCMA, 2021). However, the GAO (2024b) identified that DoD contracting officers rarely verify the substantive quality of these compliance plans beyond checking for their existence, with many plans consisting of boilerplate language that fails to address contract-specific risks or operational contexts in high-risk environments. The CTIP Newsletter (2024) further illustrates this problem, documenting that a Saudi Arabia contractor representative "said he was unaware that they were required to submit documentation for compliance certification" despite clear regulatory requirements (p. 2).

According to the FAR, prime contractors must also flow down the FAR 52.222-50 clause to all subcontractors and are liable for ensuring sub-tier compliance (FAR, 2025b). In essence, the regulatory framework pushes responsibility down the supply chain, making prime contractors accountable for policing their subcontractors. To reinforce this, contractors on applicable contracts must certify annually that neither they nor their subcontractors have engaged in prohibited activities, or if a violation was found, that appropriate action was taken (FAR 52.222-56, 2025). False certifications could expose contractors to fraud liability. Notably, scholars have argued that mechanisms like

the False Claims Act should be leveraged in such cases—effectively treating the false certification of "no trafficking" as a fraudulent claim against the government (Lanzante, 2009; Hoots, 2019). Despite these requirements, Morris et al. (2021) identified that prime contractors often lack both the incentives and capabilities to effectively monitor distant tiers of subcontractors, especially in complex construction projects where labor recruitment occurs through multiple intermediaries, creating significant visibility gaps in the enforcement chain. The Drabkin and Yukins study (2022) quantifies this concern, revealing that four of the top ten DoD contractors had repeat, willful, or repeat and willful violations related to labor laws, representing $82.5 billion (31.8%) of the total $259 billion obligated to the top 100 DoD contractors (p. 18).

4. Enforcement and Accountability Provisions

The current framework also specifies clear remedies and enforcement actions for confirmed trafficking violations. FAR 52.222-50, authorizes the government to impose a range of remedies on contractors for substantiated trafficking violations, up to and including termination of the contract and suspension or debarment from federal contracting. These remedies include requiring contractors to remove implicated employees or terminate problematic subcontracts, suspending contract payments, decrementing award fees, declining to exercise future contract options, terminating contracts for default or cause, and recommending contractors for suspension or debarment from federal contracting (FAR 22.1704, 2025). Yet, as documented by Drabkin and Yukins (2022), these severe remedies are rarely applied in practice, with the GAO finding that between 2014 and 2020, no contractors were suspended or debarred solely for trafficking violations despite multiple documented instances of contractor involvement in trafficking activities. The Drabkin and Yukins study (2022) emphasizes that "debarment is not a form of punishment. It is a tool to protect the government from doing business with contractors that are not presently responsible" (p. 22), suggesting a fundamental misunderstanding of debarment's proper function within government.

Finally, recent legislative initiatives highlight Congress's intent to strengthen enforcement further. The proposed End Human Trafficking in Government Contracts Act of 2022, for instance, would mandate inspectors general to directly refer substantiated

trafficking violations to suspension or debarment authorities, explicitly addressing existing accountability and enforcement gaps. While these proposed reforms acknowledge the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, they tacitly recognize the systematic failure of existing regulatory frameworks to create meaningful accountability for trafficking violations, as evidenced by the persistence of trafficking cases in DoD overseas contracts despite nearly two decades of zero-tolerance policies (GAO, 2024b). The Drabkin and Yukins study (2022) concludes that effective solutions require "affording [contracting officers] greater access to data and expertise on what 'finally adjudicated violations' mean vis-a-vis a contractor's present responsibility; that effort in transparency and training would almost certainly require additional resources" (p. 22).

The regulatory landscape described above reveals a fundamental disconnect between policy intentions and operational realities within the DoD's human trafficking risk management efforts. Despite extensive laws, regulations, and contractual provisions developed over the past two decades, significant implementation gaps persist in the identification, assessment, and mitigation of trafficking risks. These gaps—from omitted contract clauses and inadequate compliance verification to rare enforcement actions— directly inform this study's central research questions regarding the current limitations in DoD's trafficking risk management practices. The evidence clearly indicates that while the DoD possesses substantial regulatory tools to combat trafficking, it lacks the systematic approach necessary to effectively utilize these tools throughout the contract life cycle. This critical deficiency underscores the importance of developing a structured framework aligned with the OMB ERM Circular A-123, which can transform the DoD's fragmented compliance measures into a cohesive, proactive risk management system capable of identifying vulnerabilities, monitoring compliance consistently, and ensuring accountability within overseas construction contracts.

F.   OTHER GOVERNMENT REPORTS AND RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

A substantial body of government reports, independent studies, and academic research examines human trafficking risks within defense contracting operations, providing crucial context for understanding the effectiveness of current anti-trafficking efforts. This section analyzes key findings from the DoD OIG evaluations, DOS TIP

Report analyses, Executive Branch initiatives, and independent research that collectively highlight persistent implementation gaps in anti-trafficking measures. These diverse sources converge on a common conclusion: despite extensive policy frameworks, the DoD's current approach to combating trafficking lacks the systematic, risk-based methodology necessary to effectively address forced labor vulnerabilities in overseas operations.

1.   DoD Inspector General Evaluations

A substantial body of government reports and independent studies have examined the challenges of human trafficking and forced labor within U.S. government operations and procurement, offering critical insights into the effectiveness of existing anti-trafficking measures and the significant challenges that persist. A key source in this area is the DoD IG, which conducted a pivotal evaluation of the DoD's CTIP activities in Kuwait in 2019. Kuwait represents a significant overseas contracting footprint for supporting U.S. forces in the USCENTCOM AOR. The findings presented in the DoD OIG's Report No. DODIG-2019-088 were particularly troubling, highlighting a systemic failure by USCENTCOM officials to consistently apply the established DoD and command policies aimed at identifying and monitoring trafficking in persons incidents. Consequently, USCENTCOM remained vulnerable to undetected labor trafficking incidents on military bases due to systematic and operational compliance failures (DoD OIG, 2019).

Specifically, the DoD OIG identified numerous compliance deficiencies. Army and Air Force contracting officers frequently neglected to include the mandatory FAR 52.222-50 anti-trafficking clause in contracts conducted in Kuwait and failed to establish Quality Assurance Surveillance Plans (QASPs) specifically addressing CTIP monitoring (DoD OIG, 2019). Moreover, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), a significant employer of third-country nationals, exhibited inconsistent monitoring practices, further compromising compliance and accountability (DoD OIG, 2019). Alarmingly, according to the DoD OIG (2019), the DoD contracting organizations in Kuwait lacked access to authoritative, accurate information on local labor laws, including

minimum wage and housing standards—information vital to effectively enforcing anti-trafficking measures defined by the FAR clauses.

A stark illustration of this oversight failure involved a DoD food services contractor in Kuwait that subjected migrant workers to debt bondage, excessive recruitment fees, unpaid overtime—the contractor required them to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week without breaks with sub-minimum wages—and substandard housing conditions (DoD OIG, 2019). This abuse continued unnoticed by oversight officials until a complaint triggered a military investigation, clearly underscoring the gap between existing anti-trafficking policies and their practical enforcement in overseas contingency environments. The DoD OIG (2019) recommended critical improvements, including clearly defined command-level oversight responsibilities, strict adherence to contracting clauses inclusions in contracts, improved quality assurance and surveillance plans, and establishment of reliable information on host-nation labor standards. While USCENTCOM generally concurred, the report highlighted ongoing ambiguity and pushback in defining and assigning command-level CTIP roles (DoD OIG, 2019).

2. Department of State TIP Report Analyses

Another essential governmental resource is the DOS's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. Although global in scope, this report significantly impacts the DoD operations by categorizing nations based on their trafficking risks. Countries ranked as Tier 3 or placed on the Tier 2 Watch List often align with regions of significant U.S. military contracting activity, such as Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan, heightening operational risk for DoD contracts (Weber et al., 2019). While the TIP Report is recognized as a critical diplomatic instrument for driving anti-trafficking reforms, critics—including Congress and oversight entities—have expressed concerns about its inconsistency and potential susceptibility to political influence. For instance, CRS report R44953 highlighted controversies over politically motivated changes in tier rankings, such as Malaysia's disputed removal from Tier 3 in 2015 during key trade negotiations. Similar concerns emerged regarding rankings involving countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, particularly in areas of child soldiering and human rights abuses (Weber et al., 2019).

The TIP Report places countries into one of four categories based on their government's efforts to meet the minimum standards set by the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* (TVPA). Tier 1 includes countries whose governments fully meet these standards. Tier 2 countries do not fully meet the standards but are making significant efforts to do so. The Tier 2 Watch List identifies countries making efforts but where trafficking is very significant or growing without proportionate response. Tier 3 includes governments failing to meet the minimum standards and not making significant efforts (DOS, 2024a). Figure 5 illustrates the Near East regional tier placements as assessed in the *2024 TIP Report*, highlighting that Bahrain achieved Tier 1 status, while Iran and Syria remain Tier 3 countries. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are categorized under Tier 2, and Kuwait and Lebanon are currently listed on the Tier 2 Watch List. These classifications carry important implications for DoD contracting risk profiles in these regions.

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2 Watch List	Tier 3	Special Case
Bahrain	Egypt	Algeria	Iran	Libya
	Iraq	Kuwait	Syria	Yemen
	Israel	Lebanon		
	Jordan			
	Morocco			
	Oman			
	Qatar			
	Saudi Arabia			
	Tunisia			
	United Arab Emirates			

Figure 4.   Near East Tier Placements. Source: Department of State (2024a).

Although the TIP Report remains a valuable risk indicator, criticisms—particularly those raised in the 2019 CRS Report—indicate that relying solely on tier rankings without contextual analysis may inadequately capture actual trafficking vulnerabilities. Despite these limitations, the TIP Report underscores trafficking's global reach, currently affecting an estimated 27 million people (DOS, 2024a). While Table 1 presents data from 2017 to 2023, this review primarily examines the 2020–2023 period, capturing the most recent patterns in enforcement activity.

Table 1.   Near East Region Trafficking Numbers. Source: Department of State (2024a).

Year	Total Prosecutions	Prosecutions – Labor Only	Total Convictions	Convictions – Labor Only	Total Victims Identified	Victims Identified – Labor Only	New or Amended Legislation
2017	974	112	104	11	1,834	53	0
2018	738	10	155	7	2,675	83	0
2019	788	44	419	22	3,619	35	0
2020	533	106	414	84	3,461	1,827	0
2021	869	356	353	88	3,440	1,127	1
2022	644	173	545	85	2,980	1,790	0
2023	2,258	1,344	770	390	3,450	1,596	2

Data reflect victims identified, labor trafficking prosecutions, and convictions in the Near East region

A closer examination of Near East trafficking trends during this period, as presented in Table 1, reveals a concerning persistence. Although 2023 recorded the highest number of labor trafficking prosecutions (1,344) and convictions (390) over the four-year span, the total number of identified victims has remained consistently high, with only a negligible decrease from 3,461 in 2020 to 3,450 in 2023. The continuing prevalence of trafficking despite increased prosecutions underscores the necessity of adopting a structured, ERM framework to proactively identify, mitigate, and monitor human trafficking risks in defense contracting operations.

3.   Executive Branch Strategic Initiatives

Reflecting growing recognition of trafficking as an economic and national security threat, the President's 2021 National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAP 2021) explicitly prioritizes addressing forced labor within global supply chains connected to federal procurement. The NAP emphasizes integrating anti-trafficking strategies with broader efforts on workers' rights, fair trade, and supply-chain security, advocating improved government-wide procurement practices to ensure that essential goods and services are obtained without inadvertently supporting trafficking (The White House, 2021). This approach signals a strategic shift towards understanding human trafficking not solely as a human rights issue but as a multifaceted threat impacting national security and economic stability, making it highly relevant to the DoD's dual role as both a security agency and a major federal buyer.

4.   Academic and Independent Research Findings

Independent studies from academia and think tanks have reinforced and critiqued DoD's anti-trafficking initiatives. Notably, Morris et al. (2021), through their comprehensive study, "The Price of Slavery," used DoD contracting data to identify overseas expenditures most vulnerable to trafficking risks, highlighting regions consistently ranked poorly by the TIP Report. Their analysis showed that the DoD awarded billions of dollars in contracts in countries with high trafficking risks (Tier 2, Tier 2 Watch List or Tier 3 countries on the TIP Report), particularly in sectors like construction, base operations, and food services with severe trafficking problems. The authors advocated for an explicit risk management strategy involving improved metrics, enhanced training, and more robust oversight mechanisms to mitigate these vulnerabilities effectively (Morris et al., 2021).

Additional studies reinforce these concerns. Hoots (2019) identified significant jurisdictional loopholes within existing Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) undermining the zero-tolerance policy, and called for stronger anti-trafficking provisions. Similarly, Grush (2016) criticized the reactive nature of U.S. military anti-trafficking efforts, advocating for enhanced interagency collaboration and more effective oversight. Snoke (2015) highlighted trafficking's adverse national security impacts in Southeast Asia and recommended strengthened international partnerships. Furthermore, a 2023 report by the Human Trafficking Institute indicated that forced labor cases accounted for only approximately 3% of federal trafficking prosecutions and emphasized critical accountability gaps in U.S. overseas operations related to labor trafficking (Human Trafficking Institute, 2024).

Collectively, these government reports and independent studies underscore significant implementation gaps within the DoD's CTIP framework, particularly regarding oversight, accountability, and proactive risk-based management practices. Repeatedly highlighted shortcomings by oversight bodies—including the GAO and DoD OIG reports—strongly reinforce the necessity for a structured and systematic approach beyond existing ad-hoc compliance methods. These documented gaps substantiate the thesis's central proposition: integrating a robust, ERM-based approach within the DoD's

anti-trafficking initiatives is not only justified but essential to effectively addressing forced labor risks within defense contracting operations globally. The documented oversight and implementation gaps reinforce the importance of answering the thesis's research questions on how an ERM framework can systematically improve the DoD's CTIP oversight, accountability, and risk mitigation.

G. BEST PRACTICES FROM RELATED FIELDS AND OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

While the DoD has encountered challenges in systematically managing human trafficking risks in its procurement processes, valuable lessons can be drawn from other federal agencies and related fields that have successfully implemented risk-based approaches. This section examines exemplary practices from the DOS, Department of Labor (DOL), and private-sector supply chain management that demonstrate how structured risk management frameworks can effectively address trafficking vulnerabilities. By analyzing these models, this research identifies transferable strategies and proven methodologies that the DoD could adapt to enhance its CTIP initiatives, particularly in high-risk overseas construction contracts. These best practices collectively emphasize the importance of data-driven risk assessment, systematic monitoring, clear accountability, and leadership commitment—elements essential to establishing an effective ERM approach to human trafficking

1. Department of State's Risk-Based Approach

The DOS exemplifies notable best practices in systematically managing human trafficking risks within its contracting processes. According to the GAO's evaluation (2024b), DOS effectively utilizes data from its annual TIP Report to identify countries posing heightened trafficking risks, significantly improving risk visibility within procurement activities. As detailed in Appendix B, Table 9, the State Department's systematic risk-based approach to CTIP contracting provides several advantages over the DoD's current fragmented practices, particularly in risk identification and monitoring frameworks. Collaborating with the OMB, the DOS proactively identified over 50 procurement categories at elevated risk for human trafficking, leveraging DOL reports on goods produced by forced labor (GAO, 2024b). These measures enable DOS

procurement officials to incorporate targeted safeguards into contracts and clearly communicate high-risk areas to contracting officers, thereby enhancing compliance and effectiveness in anti-trafficking efforts (GAO, 2024b).

2. Department of Labor's ERM Implementation

The DOL's Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG) provides another robust example of successfully implementing the OMB's ERM Circular A-123 (DOL, 2022). DOL-OIG developed a comprehensive ERM framework explicitly designed for systematically managing enterprise-level risks. The framework emphasizes structured processes that include establishing context, identifying and evaluating risks systematically, developing alternative responses, executing mitigation strategies, and continuously monitoring outcomes (DOL, 2022). Furthermore, integrating ERM with automated platforms such as the Inspector General Statistical System (IGStat) and the Inspector General Risk Management System (IGRisk) facilitates efficient data collection, risk tracking, and real-time reporting. This automated approach not only ensures *OMB Circular A-123* compliance but also enhances organizational resilience and strategic decision-making. Given similarities in operational scope and complexity between the DOL and DoD, DOL's successful ERM implementation provides a practical benchmark for demonstrating the feasibility of adopting a similar risk management framework within the DoD's CTIP program (DOL, 2022).

The DOL-OIG's framework implementation includes several practical elements that provide valuable insights for DoD. Specifically, their approach categorizes risks into five distinct assessment areas—strategic, operational, compliance, reporting, and financial—each with clearly defined criteria for severity and likelihood (DOL, 2022). Their framework also employs a five-level maturity model ranging from "Initial" to "Optimized" that enables agencies to benchmark their current ERM capabilities and establish progressive improvement targets. For trafficking risks specifically, this model would allow the DoD to evaluate its current trafficking risk management practices against established benchmarks, pinpoint specific areas for enhancement, and measure progress systematically over time. These structured assessment methodologies have demonstrably improved DOL's ability to allocate oversight resources based on risk profiles rather than

rigid compliance checklists—precisely the paradigm shift needed in DoD's approach to trafficking prevention (DOL, 2022).

3. Supply Chain Due Diligence Best Practices

To enhance its CTIP initiatives, the DoD can also leverage best practices from other federal government experiences and private-sector supply chain management. One key resource is the Procurement and Supply Chains Committee of the President's Interagency Task Force (PITF), which established a set of *Anti-Trafficking Risk Management Best Practices* aligned with OMB's 2019 guidance (OMB, 2019). Many of these best practices are outlined within the Responsible Sourcing Tool, a publicly accessible platform funded by DOS, designed to help entities combat trafficking in their supply chains. Recommended measures include designating senior-level officials explicitly accountable for anti-trafficking compliance—beyond minimal FAR requirements—which signals organizational commitment and ensures continuous monitoring of trafficking risks (OMB, 2019).

Another widely recognized best practice involves creating comprehensive codes of conduct and explicit anti-trafficking policies applicable to all employees and subcontractors, even when not mandated explicitly by contracts (OMB, 2019). These policies typically accompany specialized training programs, particularly for recruitment staff and managers operating in high-risk regions. Additionally, best practices in supply chain due diligence include conducting focused risk assessments to identify supply-chain segments related to construction services or geographic regions presenting heightened forced labor risks. For example, for a DoD construction project in a country with known trafficking issues, such as Kuwait, best practices involve requiring contractors to pre-screen labor recruiters, selecting only ethically certified recruiters, and potentially engaging independent compliance monitors to interview laborers onsite. PITF and OMB advocate implementing supplier and subcontractor monitoring plans, employee grievance mechanisms such as employee hotlines, and third-party compliance audits to ensure effective enforcement (OMB, 2019).

4.   Contractor Accountability and Incentive Mechanisms

Although the FAR does not explicitly mandate all these steps, OMB guidance recommends that agencies give preference to contractors who proactively adopt these best practices when evaluating proposals or performance. In DoD contracting, this could mean incorporating CTIP criteria into past-performance evaluations and source selection processes. A contractor demonstrating proactive and effective anti-trafficking measures could thus be viewed as a lower-risk and superior performer. The DoD OIG further recommended consistently recording trafficking compliance issues in the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), a practice that creates accountability and informs future contracting decisions. Despite this recommendation, the IG identified inconsistencies in CPARS application (DoD OIG, 2019).

5.   Internal DoD Comparable Programs and Interagency Collaboration

Internally, the DoD can look to analogous initiatives, notably the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program, which has successfully integrated robust confidential reporting mechanisms, victim advocacy, mandatory training, and consistent tracking of incidents and trends (Dippold et al., 2016). Intensive monitoring and data-driven evaluations have been credited by the GAO and DoD leadership as key to the reduction of sexual assault cases within the military (Morris et al., 2021). Adopting a similar emphasis on metrics and feedback mechanisms—such as routine worker feedback sessions—could significantly strengthen the DoD's CTIP efforts, enabling earlier detection and improved documentation of trafficking violations, which currently remain ad hoc and insufficiently recorded (DoD OIG, 2019).

Additionally, literature emphasizes best practices related to interagency collaboration and external partnerships. The 2021 National Action Plan (NAP) underscores the importance of adopting a "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approach to trafficking prevention and mitigation (The White House, 2021). Accordingly, the DoD can enhance its CTIP efforts by institutionalizing cooperation through formal partnerships or memoranda of understanding with DOS, DOL, USAID, and civil society organizations as the OMB explicitly calls CTIP a "shared responsibility" among all parties involved in acquisition (OMB, 2019). Leveraging external expertise, as seen

through DOL's partnerships with NGOs for forced labor training, can strengthen the DoD CTIP program effectiveness. The Responsible Sourcing Tool further provides contractors with practical resources such as compliance plans, self-assessment questionnaires, and risk maps, representing best practices in risk identification and mitigation. OMB guidance encourages contracting officers to require contractors to demonstrate proactive anti-trafficking efforts during proposal and performance evaluations (OMB, 2019).

Finally, broader government guidance—such as the Chief Financial Officers Council's ERM Playbook—emphasizes leadership commitment, communication, and continuous improvement as best practices (Chief Financial Officers Council, 2016). By conceptualizing CTIP through an ERM lens, DoD leadership can ensure that senior management maintains regular focus on trafficking risks, aligns resources effectively, and fosters a culture of proactive risk management that extends beyond mere regulatory compliance.

H. GAPS IN CURRENT LITERATURE AND FRAMEWORKS

Despite extensive policy development and increased awareness of human trafficking risks in defense contracting, significant gaps persist in both academic literature and operational frameworks, that limit the DoD's ability to effectively manage these risks. This section identifies and analyzes five critical gaps that collectively hinder the implementation of a systematic approach to anti-trafficking efforts: policy implementation failures, data and transparency limitations, structural and incentive misalignments, inadequate integration with ERM frameworks, and environmental and cultural barriers. These interrelated gaps help explain why, despite nearly two decades of zero-tolerance policies, human trafficking violations continue to occur in DoD overseas contracts. By methodically examining these deficiencies, this section establishes the foundation for the research's proposed ERM-based framework, which specifically aims to address these persistent challenges in DoD's anti-trafficking efforts.

1. Policy Implementation Failures

Despite extensive regulations and increased awareness of human trafficking risks, notable gaps persist in current literature and the DoD's CTIP frameworks, hindering

alignment with an effective ERM approach. One prominent issue is the "say–do" gap—the disparity between anti-trafficking policies and their practical enforcement in the operational environment. Multiple studies document that the USG's stated zero-tolerance policy is inconsistently applied in practice (DoD OIG, 2019). Continued involvement of U.S. service members in prostitution and forced labor near military bases further indicates systemic weaknesses within the DoD's anti-trafficking program (Grush, 2016). For example, the DoD OIG (2010) identified significant compliance deficiencies, including failures to insert mandatory anti-trafficking clauses into defense contracts, highlighting critical oversight vulnerabilities.

Moreover, training and awareness efforts have not adequately reached all levels of the contracting and subcontracting workforce. Morris et al. (2021) noted that mandatory CTIP training completion rates need improvement and emphasized that acquisition personnel often lack clarity regarding what human trafficking entails within contractual contexts. An IG investigation found contracting officers and contracting officer representatives (CORs) were frequently uncertain about their responsibilities beyond inserting the required FAR clauses, lacking clarity on actively monitoring contractor compliance (DoD OIG, 2019). These findings underscore a significant systematic oversight gap—effective compliance demands not merely knowledge of procedures but also adequately trained personnel and consistent leadership reinforcement. For example, the DoD CTIP PMO provides different practical guides, tools, checklists and procedures to Contracting Officers (KOs) and CORs whereas the execution of these regulatory-aligned procedures lacks follow-throughs. Academic critiques by Grush (2016) and Hoots (2019) describe military anti-trafficking efforts as insufficient or complacent. Hoots specifically noted jurisdictional limitations hindering prosecution of trafficking cases around military bases, leaving some offenders without accountability to include defense contractors and DA civilians (Hoots, 2019).

2. Data and Transparency Limitations

Another critical gap involves data and transparency. Current literature highlights a scarcity of publicly accessible data about the effectiveness of DoD's CTIP initiatives. Essential performance metrics—such as the annual number of trafficking incidents

identified within DoD contracts, the frequency of contractor suspensions or debarments, and actual use of contract remedies—remain largely unclear and inadequately reported. The DoD OIG (2019) found that USCENTCOM's recording and reporting of trafficking incidents were ad-hoc, inconsistent and incomplete, complicating risk management and program assessment. Additionally, the Human Trafficking Institute (2024) reported that only 5% of federal trafficking cases since 2000 involved forced labor, suggesting significant under-investigation of labor trafficking within government supply chains. With limited criminal prosecutions, administrative enforcement becomes essential, yet enforcement has been inconsistent, weakening accountability.

3.   Structural and Incentive Misalignments

Furthermore, scholars have highlighted structural gaps within the federal contracting incentive framework. Grimmer (as cited in Morris et al., 2021) argued that the current system creates a "reverse incentive," encouraging prime contractors to remain intentionally unaware of subcontractors' violations to avoid liability. Since a contractor can be held accountable once aware of a violation, Grimmer suggests contractors might prefer to remain willfully ignorant (Morris et al., 2021). Furthermore, contractor self-reporting of trafficking incidents is reportedly rare; for instance, violations uncovered in Kuwait arose from military investigations, not proactive reporting by contractors (DoD OIG, 2019). Eichelberger (2020) further emphasized that vulnerable populations, such as migrant workers on DoD contracts, often lack knowledge of reporting mechanisms or fear retaliation, indicating a critical gap in worker protections and reporting channels.

4.   Inadequate Integration with ERM Frameworks

Additionally, a significant literature gap exists regarding integrating the DoD CTIP processes into comprehensive ERM frameworks. Although OMB provided high-level guidance requiring federal agencies to integrate strategic, operational, and tactical risks—including financial or fraud-related risks—into ERM (OMB, 2019), limited research exists exploring whether the DoD has effectively incorporated human trafficking into enterprise risk assessments. The DoD's Agency Financial Reports rarely recognize human trafficking as a distinct risk in comparison to major weapons or terrorism risks,

suggesting a conceptual gap where CTIP remains a compliance-driven initiative rather than a strategic risk management priority. Currently, no published studies have evaluated the DoD's CTIP programs' alignment through an ERM lens—an essential gap this thesis aims to address.

5.   Environmental and Cultural Barriers

Finally, the literature highlights gaps stemming from external environmental factors and internal cultural priorities. Limited labor oversight, such as in Kuwait and Afghanistan, exacerbates forced labor violations in war and disaster zones where DoD operates. Siskin and Wyler (2013) emphasize that human trafficking flourishes in environments of poverty, limited oversight, and corruption—conditions frequently encountered in areas of DoD operations. Hoots (2019) recommends enhancing jurisdiction through Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs), yet widespread implementation remains lacking. Moreover, Morris et al. (2021) point out that combating trafficking competes with numerous other operational and contractual priorities, often gaining attention only after public scandals. For example, according to Morris et al., contracting officers and commanders often focus more immediately on costs, deadlines, and security than on labor practices deep in subcontractor chains. In addition, the Commission on Wartime Contracting highlighted significant losses due to fraud, waste, and abuse, with potential benefits flowing to traffickers, suggesting a persistent gap in sustained leadership visibility and prioritization (Morris et al., 2021).

Hence, current literature and frameworks reveal critical gaps: (1) inconsistent implementation and oversight, (2) inadequate data and transparency, (3) misaligned contractor incentives and inadequate reporting, (4) limited integration into ERM strategies, and (5) environmental and cultural barriers such as weak host-nation enforcement and internal cultural prioritization shortfalls. Identifying and understanding these gaps is essential, as this thesis specifically aims to bridge them by proposing an ERM-based approach, enhancing compliance, improving data-driven risk assessments, realigning contractor incentives, and elevating human trafficking as a critical DoD strategic priority.

I. SUMMARY

This literature review examined the foundations of the DoD's efforts to combat forced labor and human trafficking within overseas contracts, including the current legal and policy frameworks, evaluations of their effectiveness, and best practices that can enhance outcomes. The theoretical basis for addressing trafficking combines a human rights-based policy commitment—characterized by zero tolerance for trafficking and the "3Ps" approach (prevention, protection, and prosecution)—with contemporary management approaches exemplified by the OMB ERM Circular A-124 ERM's holistic, data-driven mitigation strategies. This integrated theoretical framework aligns particularly well with an organization such as the DoD, which must operationalize high-level ethical commitments within complex and dynamic operational environments.

The existing regulatory environment provides a robust foundation. Congress and executive actions have clearly mandated the DoD and other federal agencies to actively combat human trafficking, codifying requirements such as FAR/DFAR clauses that extend accountability throughout contractor/subcontractor supply chains and prescribe punitive measures for noncompliance. The DoD has institutionalized these directives through policies, contract provisions, mandatory training, and oversight mechanisms. However, as the review of government and academic reports reveals, this regulatory foundation remains incomplete. Oversight bodies such as the DoD OIG have documented persistent shortcomings in enforcement—including missing contract clauses, insufficient monitoring practices, and continued instances of severe labor abuses primarily in high-risk areas where services contracts are in high demand such as construction, food, and cleaning services. Consistently, both government and independent analyses highlight a pronounced gap between anti-trafficking policies and their practical implementation on ground, urging substantial improvements in accountability, data transparency, and adequate resourcing for combating human trafficking, principally forced labor.

To address these gaps, the literature and best practices from other sectors and federal agencies suggest multiple practical approaches, informing this thesis's objective. Experiences from other federal entities and leading private-sector organizations demonstrate that adopting risk management best practices—such as prioritizing high-risk

areas, empowering dedicated compliance personnel, utilizing independent compliance audits, and fostering organizational cultures rooted in transparency and continuous improvement—can significantly reduce labor abuses within the construction services contracts and its supply chains. Moreover, the DoD's own successes in related areas, such as the significant progress in combating sexual assault within military ranks, illustrate that organizational change is achievable when leadership engagement, clear metrics, and consistent training align effectively. Nevertheless, as highlighted in the literature, the DoD's CTIP program has substantial room for improvement in embracing these proven approaches in risk management practices. Particularly needed are refined incentive structures that reward proactive trafficking prevention, strengthened interagency and host-nation cooperation, and elevation of CTIP initiatives beyond mere compliance measures toward comprehensive operational risk management.

Aligning the practices of the DoD's CTIP PMO with the OMB ERM Framework (Circular A-123) represents a strategic approach to bridging these identified gaps. ERM integration compels the DoD to proactively identify trafficking risks, allocate resources effectively toward the most significant vulnerabilities, systematically evaluate intervention effectiveness, and reinforce managerial accountability for outcomes—recommendations consistently supported by the literature yet not fully actualized in current operational environments. Such integration can shift the DoD from a reactive stance, often only addressing trafficking violations after they occur, toward preventive governance, where potential issues are anticipated and mitigated before they arise. However, according to an interview with the CTIP PMO Director (2024), the CTIP PMO's role is limited to policy development and training support, and implementing an ERM-aligned approach across the contracting enterprise would require additional resources and close coordination with the DPCAP office under Acquisition and Sustainment (A&S), which holds the authority to issue contract policy and implementation directives.

Overall, this literature review has established the context and provided a strong justification for adopting an ERM-based approach within the DoD's anti-trafficking framework. It underscores the strengths of the existing policy landscape—including a comprehensive regulatory structure and demonstrated political commitment—as well as

critical weaknesses such as persistent gaps in implementation, oversight, and strategic prioritization to human trafficking risks. Drawing insights from other federal agencies and complementary fields, the following chapters of this thesis will leverage these findings to propose a concrete, systematic approach for embedding ERM principles within the DoD's CTIP program and processes. Ultimately, the objective is to create a more robust and effective anti-trafficking framework—one that fulfills legal obligations and genuinely protects the human rights and dignity of individuals working under DoD contracts globally.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> Enterprise risk management (ERM) is a forward-looking management approach that allows agencies to assess the full impact of potential events on achieving their objectives.
>
> Government Accountability Office (2016)

A. INTRODUCTION

This research explores how the DoD can develop and implement a systematic approach to managing human trafficking risks in its procurement processes. The study is driven by findings from the 2024b GAO report, which highlights substantial gaps in the DoD's ability to systematically identify, mitigate, and monitor human trafficking risks in overseas construction contracts. These gaps include the absence of a structured risk management framework, inconsistent enforcement of anti-trafficking policies, and challenges in tracking subcontractor compliance.

To address these deficiencies, this study adopts a qualitative research design that integrates document analysis, expert interviews, and a focused case study analysis of Kuwait to examine the current state of the DoD's CTIP PMO and its alignment with the OMB ERM Framework Circular A-123. The study's focus on overseas military construction contracts in the USCENTCOM AOR, particularly in Kuwait, allows for an in-depth exploration of trafficking risks in high-risk, labor-intensive contracting environments.

B. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative exploratory research design to examine the effectiveness of the DoD's current processes for combating trafficking in persons (CTIP). Qualitative methods are particularly suited to this type of examination as they facilitate an interpretative analysis of federal and DoD CTIP policies, complex regulatory frameworks, and operational challenges in high-risk defense procurement settings.

A case study approach is also utilized, focusing on overseas military construction services contracts within the USCENTCOM AOR, specifically operations in Kuwait

under the 408th Contracting Support Brigade (CSB). This case study enables a focused assessment of human trafficking risks in high-risk environments and allows for a comparative analysis of best practices from other federal agencies, such as the DOS.

The research design is structured around the OMB ERM framework Circular A-123, which provides a risk-based approach to managing procurement-related human trafficking vulnerabilities in defense contracting throughout the contracting life cycle. Following an exploratory interpretive approach, this study focuses on policy gaps, enforcement challenges, and operational inefficiencies in CTIP implementation and proposes enhancements to current risk management approaches.

C.   DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The study employs two primary methods of data collection: document analysis and expert interviews. These complementary methods ensure a comprehensive evaluation of trafficking risks to identify future risk mitigation strategies, regulatory oversight, CTIP PMO current processes for combating trafficking risks, policy effectiveness, and enforcement challenges in defense contracts.

1.   Document Analysis

Document analysis involves the systematic review and interpretation of written official government reports, regulatory documents, CTIP PMO documents (for example, process maps, tools, and checklists), OMB best practices regarding anti-human trafficking efforts in defense contracting, and scholarly studies to assess the effectiveness and challenges of the DoD's anti-trafficking measures. Some key sources include:

a.   Government Accountability Office and DoD Inspecter General Reports:

- GAO (2024b) – *Agencies Need to Adopt a Systematic Approach to Manage Risks in Contracts*
- GAO (2021) – *DoD Should Address Weaknesses in Oversight of Contractors and Reporting of Investigations*
- GAO (2016) – *Enterprise Risk Management: Selected Agencies' Experiences Illustrate Good Practices in Managing Risk*
- GAO (2014) – *Oversight of Contractors' Use of Foreign Workers in High-Risk Environments Needs to Be Strengthened*

b. Department of Defense Policies and Directives:

- DoD Instruction 2200.01: Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP)
- DoD Strategic Plan for CTIP (2014-2018)
- FAR Subpart 22.17 and DFARS Subpart 222.17: Combating Trafficking in Persons Provisions
- *OMB Circular A-123* (Enterprise Report Management Framework)

c. Academic and Institutional Research:

- NPS theses, capstone reports, dissertations and faculty report related to the DoD contracting and anti-trafficking policies
- Reports from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Human Trafficking Institute

These key documents serve as primary information sources for identifying systemic weaknesses in the DoD's risk management approach to forced labor in construction services contracts. The analysis focuses on identifying patterns, enforcement gaps, and notable practices to provide a thorough assessment of current anti-trafficking measures in defense contracting.

2. Expert Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with TIP subject matter experts, DPCAP, DoD contracting officers, and compliance professionals in the defense contracting system complement the findings from document analysis. This qualitative approach ensures that practical insights and real-world experiences inform the research findings. Interview participants include professionals with expertise in contracting, compliance, risk management, and enforcement of anti-trafficking regulations, with particular focus on those with experience in the USCENTCOM AOR and Kuwait. These include the following:

(1)   CTIP Program Management Office (PMO) personnel experts who develop policy, tools, checklists and standards for combating trafficking in DoD contracts, and train DoD personnel

(2)   DoD contracting officers responsible for procurement processes and ensuring compliance with anti-trafficking regulations in construction services contracts in the USCENTCOM AOR and Kuwait

(3)   Defense Acquisition University (DAU) experts in the FAR/DFARS regulations and polices with knowledge of forced labor risks in the construction services

(4)   Representatives from other agencies, such as the State Department. the OUSD(A&S) / DPCAP-Contract Policy, and others as needed

(5)   (5) Defense Pricing, Contracting, and Acquisition Policy (DPCAP) officials responsible for issuing DoD-wide contract policy and guidance, including class deviations and contingency contracting regulations

All interviews and meetings adhere to ethical standards of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The responses are analyzed to identify patterns in how human trafficking risks and gaps in operational defense contracting are identified, addressed, and mitigated, with particular attention to forced labor in construction services contracts in Kuwait.

To ensure ethical compliance, interview questions were reviewed and approved by the Naval Postgraduate School's Institutional Review Board (IRB) under protocol number NPS.2025.0034-DD-N [CASE ID 5871], approved on 22 November 2024. The semi-structured interview protocol included questions such as: (1) "What risk assessment tools or checklists currently exist to help contracting officers evaluate human trafficking risks before solicitation?" (2) "What monitoring tools or checklists exist for CORs to detect potential trafficking violations?" (3) "How does the CTIP PMO coordinate with other agencies on trafficking risk management?" (4) "What do you see as the main gaps or challenges in the current processes for managing trafficking risks?" The complete interview protocol is provided in Appendix A. These questions were distributed via email to the CTIP PMO Director, who facilitated access to relevant stakeholders and subject matter experts, including DPCAP officials, DAU professors, contracting officers, and other government experts. Interviews were conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams, involving both group discussions with key stakeholders and individual one-on-one

discussions. The study initially aimed to conduct 15 interviews, targeting a diverse range of experts across the specified categories. Ultimately, 10 interviews were completed due to availability and scheduling constraints, providing sufficient data to identify key patterns and insights into trafficking risk management practices.

D. DATA ANALYSIS

This study employs qualitative content analysis to systematically examine the collected data, identifying patterns, themes, and trends related to human trafficking risks in defense contracting. This approach is effective for the systematic examination of complex issues, including regulatory frameworks, policy effectiveness, and enforcement gaps in construction services contracts in the USCENTCOM AOR.

1. Analysis of Documents

The initial phase of information analysis involves a detailed review of official reports—governmental and academic—policies, and regulatory frameworks concerning anti-trafficking efforts in defense contracting, with particular emphasis on current CTIP PMO processes, checklists and tools. This analysis involves a structured methodology in which documents are carefully examined to identify themes, gaps, and contradictions in regulations and operational processes. A central focus of this analysis is mapping CTIP PMO existing processes against the OMB ERM framework components to identify specific alignment gaps and improvement opportunities to trafficking risks management. Other key elements that are analyzed are existing trafficking policy effectiveness, violations enforcement gaps, best practices, and their alignment with the OMB ERM framework.

a. *Process Mapping and Gap Analysis*

A comprehensive mapping exercise forms a critical component of the document analysis, which consists of the following four steps:

(1) **CTIP Process Identification:** Each CTIP PMO process, tool, checklist, and document related to trafficking risk management is identified and

categorized according to contract life cycle phase (pre-award, award, post-award).

(2) **OMB ERM Component Alignment:** Each identified CTIP process is mapped to the corresponding OMB ERM framework component (identify, assess, respond, monitor, communicate) to determine alignment.

(3) **Gap Analysis:** Systematic gaps are identified where CTIP processes are missing, insufficient, or misaligned with OMB ERM framework components.

(4) **Comparative Analysis:** CTIP PMO processes are compared against best practices from other federal agencies to identify potential opportunities for improving both risk management approaches and operational effectiveness in addressing trafficking risks.

This methodical alignment of processes enables a structured evaluation of how the CTIP PMO currently manages trafficking risks throughout the contract life cycle and identifies specific areas where alignment with ERM principles could be strengthened in response to the GAO (2024b) reporting recommendations.

b. Content Analysis of Regulatory and Operational Documents

Beyond process mapping, the analysis examines the content and effectiveness of relevant documents and regulations through a structured analytical approach:

(1) **Regulatory Framework Evaluation:** FAR and DFARS provisions are systematically analyzed to assess the following:

- Enforceability of anti-trafficking requirements in contractor operations
- Comprehensiveness of coverage across trafficking risk areas
- Clarity of contractor obligations and compliance requirements
- Practical effectiveness in preventing forced labor in construction services in overseas contracts

(2) **Oversight Mechanism Assessment:** DoD oversight and monitoring processes are examined to identify weaknesses and operational challenges that may impede effective enforcement of anti-trafficking measures:

- Adequacy of existing compliance verification mechanisms by contracting officials (i.e., Contracting Officers, Contracting Officers Representative (COR), Prime Contractor, Subcontractor)

- Appropriateness of resources allocation for trafficking risk management at the CTIP PMO office (i.e., staff adequacy, funding) and at the tactical level (USCENTCOM AOR)
- Effectiveness of inter-agency coordination on trafficking issues
- Specific challenges related to forced labor risks in the USCENTCOM AOR

    (3)   **Comparative Agency Analysis:** Anti-trafficking measures and best practices implemented by other federal agencies are systematically reviewed:

- DOS trafficking risk management approaches
- Department of Homeland Security enforcement mechanisms
- DOL risk management OMB ERM implementation
- Identification of transferable strategies and best practices
- Assessment of applicability to DoD construction services contracts

    (4)   **ERM Alignment Analysis:** Current DoD risk management approaches are compared against *OMB Circular A-123* risk principles to assess:

- Degree of alignment with standardized risk identification methodologies
- Adequacy of risk assessment criteria and prioritization approaches
- Appropriateness of risk response strategies and resource allocation
- Effectiveness of risk monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- Comprehensiveness of risk communication strategies

This structured analysis of regulatory and operational documents complements the process mapping exercise by evaluating the quality, effectiveness, and alignment of the content within these documents, providing a comprehensive assessment of the DoD's current approach to managing trafficking risks in construction services contracts.

2.   Analysis of Expert Interviews

Expert interviews and informal meetings with different stakeholders are analyzed to identify key insights, common themes, perspectives, and recurring concerns across the participant responses. This analysis follows a systematic approach using pre-determined and targeted questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues related to forced labor risks, policy enforcement, and compliance challenges in the construction services contracts. This analysis involves the following:

- Reviewing interview responses to identify common themes related to contractor accountability and DoD compliance monitoring

- Comparing interview findings with document analysis results to validate observations
- Identifying gaps in policy implementation based on CTIP experts' testimonies
- Mapping interview findings against the OMB ERM framework to identify areas where current practices align or diverge from established risk management principles

The findings from both data sources are cross-referenced to ensure consistency and reliability in identifying areas for policy improvement and implementation recommendation. For example, FAR Clause 52.222-50 (2025b) mandates contractors to submit compliance plans only for contracts exceeding $550,000; however, this threshold creates a gap where smaller contracts lack mandatory compliance plans, potentially increasing the risk of forced labor incidents and decreasing monitoring activities by contracting officials. Therefore, this FAR threshold should be eliminated, requiring all contractors to submit compliance plans regardless of contract value if they wish to enter into a contract with the USG. One forced laborer is still a human trafficking incident just as much as 20 forced laborers, as both would violate the USG zero-tolerance policy. By removing this threshold, contractors and subcontractors would be compelled to take extra steps to ensure compliance.

E.   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When studying sensitive topics related to human trafficking and compliance failures in defense contracting, rigorous ethical safeguards must be established to protect participants and maintain the integrity of the research. Hence, this research adheres to rigorous ethical standards despite not requiring formal IRB determination, as confirmed by the university IRB's review of the thesis requirements. Nevertheless, the following ethical principles guide this study:

1.   Informed Consent

All interview participants and key stakeholders receive clear information about the research purpose, procedures, and how their information will be used. Verbal and written consent—via email correspondence—are obtained before conducting any interviews, with participants informed of their option to not participate or withdraw at any time.

2.   Confidentiality and Anonymity

To encourage candid responses, particularly regarding sensitive topics such as internal controls or operational compliance challenges within the DoD to include potential trafficking violations and reported incidents, participants' identities, specifically victims' information are protected. No personal identifiable information is included in the research findings—they are not even collected—while responses are only presented in aggregate and general form or with non-attributable identifiers.

3.   Balanced Representation

The research seeks diverse perspectives across different organizational roles within the DoD CTIP PMO, ensuring that findings represent the full spectrum of stakeholder viewpoints rather than favoring any single perspective.

4.   Responsible Reporting

The research maintains academic integrity by adhering to principles of objective analysis and truthful representation of findings. Therefore, findings are presented accurately and objectively, with careful attention to potential implications for anti-trafficking efforts and the DoD procurement practices in order to assess current gaps and map existing processes and anti-trafficking measures against the OMB ERM A-123 framework as a proposed solution for the DoD to explore.

F.   LIMITATIONS

This study employs a robust qualitative strategy to research human trafficking risks in defense contracting, with a specific focus on forced labor in construction services contracts in the USCENTCOM AOR. However, several inherent limitations affect the generalizability and comprehensiveness of the findings. These limitations include scope, document availability and classification issues, interview representativeness challenges, resource constraints, and potential subjectivity in analysis.:

1.   Scope Limitations

The focus of this research on the USCENTCOM AOR, particularly Kuwait, provides depth but may limit the generalizability of findings to other geographic regions

with different trafficking risk profiles, legal frameworks, and operational constraints. This is intentional to provide a prototyped and tailored solution to managing trafficking risks in high-risk areas such as Kuwait.

Further, this scope is limited to the construction services contract as the initial high trafficking risk contract category while only focusing on forced labor and excluding other types of human trafficking such sex trafficking and child soldiers. These other trafficking risks and contract types are mentioned as recommendations in Chapter V to expand this research in order to enhance the DoD ERM framework implementation.

While this narrow scope allows for in-depth investigation of a specific segment of the DoD's contracting activities, it may restrict the applicability of findings to other types of contracts. For example, contracts for equipment, technology, or domestic services may involve different risk factors and compliance challenges. Figure 5 highlights the nine DoD-wide services groups that DoD contracts fall under. This study, as mentioned above, focuses on the "Construction Services" portfolio group.

Figure 5.   DoD-wide Acquisition of Services Taxonomy.
Source: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for
Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (2012).

2.   Document Availability and Classification

Some relevant documents may be unavailable for analysis due to classification restrictions or limited public access, specifically high-profile violations cases that are ongoing. This limitation potentially creates gaps in the evidence, particularly regarding sensitive operational details or ongoing enforcement actions. To mitigate this limitation, most of the analysis is conducted based on publicly available governmental, scholarly and academic reports in addition to interviews with CTIP experts in the DoD CTIP PMO office. However, this mitigation still presents certain limitations:

- **Data Currency:** Reliance on policy documents and reports may not capture the most recent enforcement trends or trafficking patterns. Additionally, these documents may vary in depth and focus, potentially leading to an incomplete understanding of the issues.

- **Interpretation Variability:** Documents can be subject to different interpretations, and the researcher's perspective may influence analysis. Similarly, the information gathered during expert interviews depends on the participants' willingness and availability to provide candid insights. While semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility and depth, they may introduce variability in the collected data, making systematic comparison challenging.

3.   Interview Representativeness

Despite efforts to include diverse stakeholders, the semi-structured interviews may not capture all relevant perspectives, especially those of subcontractors, foreign workers, or certain specialized roles within the vast DoD procurement structure. This limitation is exacerbated by several challenges: geographic constraints limiting access to overseas workers, the confidential nature of contract details not available in public domains, and the reluctance of contractors to participate in interviews that might reveal negative findings about their practices. To mitigate this limitation, coordination efforts were established with the CTIP PMO experts to conduct face-to-face interviews in Kuwait with contracting officials, construction workers, and labor representatives, as well as perform site visits to construction projects. These experts would share their findings and interview responses for inclusion in this study, providing valuable on-the-ground perspectives that would otherwise be inaccessible.

4.   Resource Constraints

The research timeframe and available resources (budget, time, and experts' availability) limit the number of interviews and the extent of document analysis possible, potentially affecting the comprehensiveness of the findings. For example, the pre-planned trip to Kuwait and USCENTCOM AOR by the CTIP PMO experts was recently cancelled due to budget constraints, which significantly limited the key findings that would have been gathered to inform this research.

Therefore, as part of the recommendations in Chapter V, this study advocates for dedicated funding and prioritization of comprehensive field research in high-risk regions. Specifically, future efforts should allocate resources for CTIP PMO experts to conduct

on-the-ground assessments, including direct observations of construction projects, worker living conditions, and labor practices, along with in-depth interviews with local stakeholders across USCENTCOM countries. These firsthand investigations would substantially enhance the DoD's ability to develop and implement evidence-based, context-specific trafficking risk management measures tailored to regional challenges.

5.   Potential Subjectivity in Analysis

The research relies on manual review and interpretation of interview responses and policy documents, which may introduce some subjective bias. To mitigate bias, findings are reviewed systematically to ensure objectivity by incorporating several methods such as the following:

- **Peer Review and Feedback:** Findings are reviewed and challenged by other scholars through multiple rounds of validation including this thesis's graduate advisors, NPS Graduate Writing Center instructors, and DoD CTIP PMO experts.
- **Triangulation:** Data from multiple sources are compared to enhance validity and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of human trafficking risks in overseas military construction contracts, with valuable insights for improving the DoD's approach to managing forced labor risks in the USCENTCOM AOR. Addressing these constraints helps contextualize the research findings and acknowledge the boundaries of their applicability and future research.

G.   SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the qualitative research methodology employed to examine how the DoD can develop and implement a systematic approach to managing human trafficking risks in its overseas contracting processes. The research design employs a case study approach focused on overseas military construction services contracts within the USCENTCOM AOR, with particular emphasis on contingency contracting operations in Kuwait.

Two complementary data collection methods are utilized: document analysis of government and academic reports, DoD policies, CTIP PMO documentation, tools and checklists, and all relevant regulatory frameworks; and expert interviews with

professionals experienced in defense contracting, compliance, and anti-trafficking efforts. The document analysis includes a structured analysis and mapping of current CTIP PMO processes against the OMB ERM framework to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement and inclusion, while the expert interviews provide practical insights into implementation challenges and effective practices in the operational environments.

The analytical approach employs qualitative content analysis of documents and thematic analysis of interview data, with findings mapped across multiple sources to enhance validity. Despite limitations related to scope, sample representativeness, and potential biases, the methodology provides a rigorous foundation for examining current anti-trafficking practices within the DoD and developing recommendations for a systematic framework aligned with ERM principles as mandated by the OMB ERM framework.

By combining document analysis with expert perspectives, this research bridges the gap between policy intentions and operational realities, enabling the development of practical recommendations that address the systematic gaps identified in the GAO's 2024b report. The findings from this methodological approach will inform the development of an enhanced framework for managing human trafficking risks throughout the DoD contracting life cycle that would address the GAO report recommendation #2.

IV. FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND PROPOSED ERM-INTEGRATED CTIP FRAMEWORK

> While the four agencies in our review have taken some steps, none have taken a systematic approach to managing trafficking risks, which would help agencies support the U.S. policy of zero tolerance for trafficking.
>
> Government Accountability Office (2024b)

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter consolidates audit evidence, interview insights, and process documentation to critically analyze how the DoD currently executes its CTIP responsibilities within overseas construction contracts. The evidence draws on multiple expert interviews—offering firsthand perspectives from CTIP experts, practitioners, and contracting officers—and a series of GAO and DoD OIG audit reports, supplemented by academic and scholarly research from 2014–2024, to provide a longitudinal view of challenges and progress. Additional insights come from the CTIP PMO's process documentation from CTIP practitioners, which outlines current operational procedures, and *OMB Circular A-123* guidance. These sources are examined through the five-phase ERM lens— Risk Identification, Risk Assessment, Risk Response, Risk Monitoring, and Risk Communication—to pinpoint trafficking risks across the pre-award, award, and post-award stages of the contract life cycle.

The chapter expands into four logically sequenced parts, moving from evidence to solutions for a comprehensive analysis. The Findings section synthesizes the current CTIP process, highlighting real-world practices and limitations observed in audit reports and interviews. Next, the Analysis of Systematic Gaps section applies the ERM framework to diagnose deficiencies that impede proactive prevention. Given these gaps, the Proposed Framework section introduces a risk-based CTIP model designed to address these deficiencies, featuring early screening, risk-tiered contract clauses, continuous monitoring plans, and an enterprise CTIP risk register governed at senior leadership levels. Finally, the Summary and transition section distills key insights and previews Chapter V, which benchmarks the proposed model against the Department of Labor

(DOL) Office of Inspector General's ERM maturity scale and outlines an implementation roadmap.

By reframing trafficking prevention as an ERM obligation, rather than a reactive compliance task, this chapter lays the analytical groundwork for a preventive, accountable CTIP program that aligns mission readiness with human rights stewardship. The analysis reveals that while the DoD has advanced its policies, critical gaps in risk identification and monitoring persist. The proposed ERM-integrated framework offers a proactive solution to resolve these issues, strengthening accountability and prevention.

B.   FINDINGS

This section synthesizes evidence from audit reports, expert interviews, and CTIP PMO process documentation to critically evaluate the DoD's current approach to managing TIP risks in overseas construction contracts. Building on the mixed-methods methodology outlined in Chapter III, the analysis addresses the research problem identified in Chapter I: the absence of a systematic risk management framework for CTIP. By applying the ERM framework's five phases (Risk Identification, Assessment, Response, Monitoring, and Communication), the analysis highlights strengths and deficiencies across the contract life cycle, laying the groundwork for a proactive, risk-based solution. The following subsection examines the DoD's CTIP process and its operational limitations, providing a foundation for the subsequent ERM-driven gap analysis.

1.   Current DoD CTIP Process Overview

As established in the literature review, the DoD's CTIP program operates under a compliance-based framework centered on policy adherence, mandatory training, and reactive case handling (DoD OIG, 2019). Figure 6 illustrates the CTIP case process flow implemented by the DoD CTIP PMO, delineating how TIP allegations involving defense contracts are reported and resolved. The process distinguishes between incidents involving service members, DoD civilians, and contractors. When a contractor is suspected of a trafficking violation, the contracting officer and inspector general (IG) are notified, an investigation is conducted, and, if substantiated, remedial actions—such as

contract remedies, suspension or debarment, and potential criminal referral—are executed in accordance with FAR 52.222-50 (2025b).
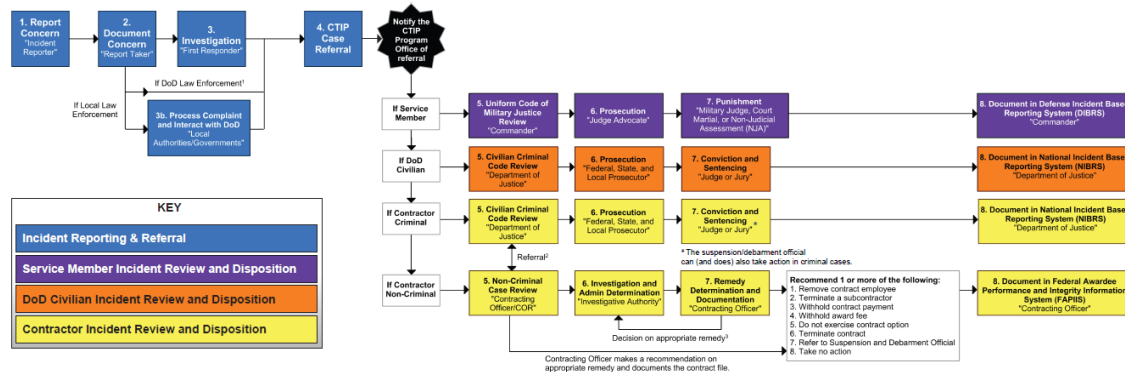
Figure 6.   Figure 6.   DoD CTIP Case Process Flow.
Source: CTIP PMO (2021).

2.   Operational Limitations and Gap Analysis

While this process provides a structured response to TIP incidents, several limitations emerge from document analysis and expert interviews, revealing gaps in proactive risk management:

- **Reactive Posture:** The current framework is predominantly reactive, initiated only after an incident is reported rather than through proactive risk detection. For instance, a 2021 GAO review highlighted a case wherein trafficking violations in a Southwest Asia base support contract were addressed only after whistleblower complaints, despite prior indicators of risk such as high subcontractor turnover. Interviewees reinforced this finding, with one CTIP PMO staff member stating, "Our process kicks in only after a problem is evident, not necessarily to prevent one" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, September 25, 2024). This reactive stance undermines the ERM phase of Risk Identification, limiting the DoD's ability to anticipate and prevent trafficking risks proactively.
- **Underdefined Roles and Responsibilities:** Prevention and monitoring duties remain unclear, weakening oversight. The GAO (2021) found that all 14 Army and Navy contracting officers and contracting officer representatives (CORs) interviewed were unaware of specific CTIP monitoring responsibilities or related regulations. This ambiguity led to inconsistent oversight, with the GAO (2024b) noting that nine of 12 contracts reviewed in 2024 failed to meet anti-trafficking requirements due to unclear accountability. This gap directly impacts the ERM phase of Risk Monitoring, as undefined roles hinder systematic compliance tracking, despite DFARS PGI 222.1703 (2025b) mandating that CORs develop a quality assurance surveillance plan (QASP) compliant with FAR 52.222-50 (2025b).
- **Fragmented Reporting Channels:** Multiple reporting avenues, such as hotlines, chains of command, and IG notifications, result in inconsistent data capture. The

GAO (2021) reported that DoD components failed to document some TIP incidents, with one instance showing officials awarding a $10 million construction contract in Kuwait to a contractor with prior violations due to unreported data. This fragmentation impairs Risk Communication, preventing leadership from accessing a comprehensive view of trafficking risks and hindering decisions about resource allocation or contractor eligibility for high-risk contracts.

These limitations are exacerbated by the underutilization of technology. Systems like FAPIIS and CPARS could flag contractors with trafficking histories, yet their use remains inconsistent, missing opportunities to identify repeat offenders. One interviewee noted, "Unless it's mandated in DFARS, many contracting officers don't search FAPIIS for TIP violations" (contracting officer, personal communication, February 12, 2025). This gap further weakens proactive Risk Identification and Monitoring. Figure 7 illustrates the fragmented allocation of responsibilities across general, pre-award, and post-award contract phases, highlighting operational gaps where program-side oversight inadequately intersects with contracting-side actions. This fragmentation hinders consistent enforcement and weakens proactive Risk Identification and Monitoring—critical elements of effective anti-trafficking risk management (OMB, 2019).
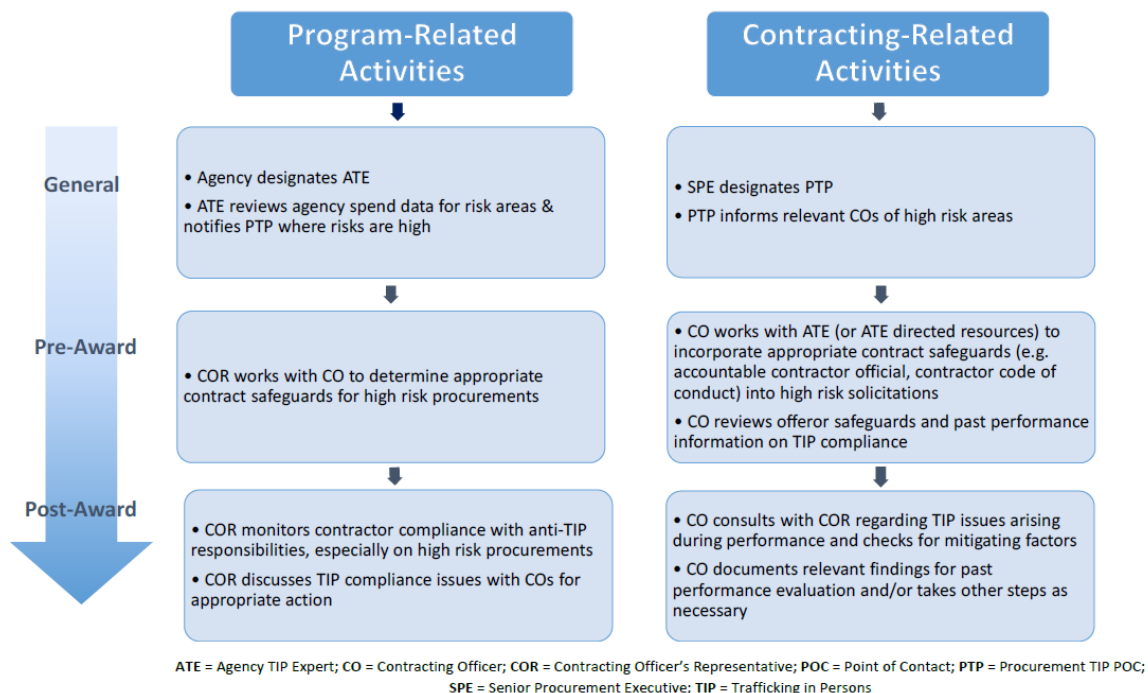
Figure 7.   Program- and Contracting-Side Roles in TIP Risk Management across General, Pre-Award, and Post-Award Phases. Source: OMB (2019).

Collectively, these findings indicate that while the DoD's CTIP process effectively enforces compliance post-incident, it lacks essential proactive elements integral to systematic risk management. Consequently, CTIP measures remain reactive, missing opportunities to proactively embed anti-trafficking practices across all contract phases, a gap the proposed ERM framework seeks to address. The subsequent sections apply the ERM framework outlined by *OMB Circular A-123*, Risk Identification, Assessment, Response, Monitoring, and Communication, to diagnose these deficiencies thoroughly (OMB, 2020). This analysis informs a proposed ERM-integrated CTIP framework designed to embed proactive risk management across the contract life cycle, addressing these critical gaps comprehensively.

C. ANALYSIS OF SYSTEMATIC GAPS

The previous section presented a synthesis of audit evidence, expert interviews, and documentation, revealing critical limitations in the DoD's current CTIP process. Building on these insights, this section systematically dissects the identified gaps through the structured lens of the ERM framework, specifically addressing each of its five phases: Risk Identification, Assessment, Response, Monitoring, and Communication (OMB, 2016). By examining how these phases currently function within the DoD's contracting life cycle—spanning pre-award, award, and post-award stages—the analysis identifies where prevention, oversight, and communication efforts falter. This systematic gap analysis, grounded in empirical evidence, establishes a clear foundation for developing a robust ERM-integrated solution aimed at proactively managing human trafficking risks across DoD contracting activities.

1. Phase 1: Risk Identification

Risk Identification, the foundational phase of ERM, involves systematically detecting potential events or conditions that could undermine DoD objectives. Within the context of CTIP, this phase specifically targets the early recognition of human trafficking and forced labor risks in overseas construction contracting, enabling proactive interventions before contracts are executed. *OMB Circular A-123* mandates federal agencies to establish robust processes to "identify internal and external risks" within their

operations (OMB, 2016, p. 7). Building upon the reactive practices and oversight gaps identified in Section B, Findings, this subsection critically evaluates the DoD's current approach to identifying trafficking risks across the pre-award, award, and post-award phases of the contract life cycle, highlighting specific deficiencies that impede effective risk management. As detailed in Appendix B, Table 9, current FAR and DFARS anti-trafficking provisions show significant alignment gaps across all five ERM phases, with particular deficiencies in systematic risk identification and assessment capabilities.

a.   Risk Identification in Pre-Award Phase (Planning and Solicitation)

The pre-award phase, encompassing requirements planning, solicitation, and source selection, provides a critical opportunity to identify TIP risks before contracts are awarded in the DoD's overseas construction contracting. An ERM-aligned approach involves assessing factors such as contract location, industry sector, labor sourcing practices, and contractor past performance to detect potential trafficking vulnerabilities. Current CTIP measures, however, focus primarily on compliance, mandating FAR 52.222-50 (2025b) in all solicitations and requiring anti-trafficking compliance plans for contracts exceeding $550,000 performed abroad. These requirements establish a baseline, signaling a zero-tolerance stance to bidders. Interviews with subject matter experts confirmed that including these clauses is now routine, reflecting an institutionalized practice that implicitly flags overseas contracts above the threshold as needing attention (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024).

Despite these strengths, significant gaps in proactive risk identification persist. The GAO (2024b) found that the DoD lacks a systematic process for analyzing trafficking risks during planning, with contracting officers relying on contractor self-certifications rather than structured risk assessments. No standardized checklist exists to flag high-risk contracts, such as those in Tier 3 countries or involving third-country nationals in Southwest Asia, limiting early detection of vulnerabilities (GAO, 2021). one contracting officer noted, "We don't have a tool to identify high-risk procurements for labor trafficking beyond the dollar threshold" (contracting officer, personal communication, October 23, 2024), a sentiment echoing the GAO's (2014) earlier recommendation to prioritize TIP in high-risk areas. As of 2021, the DoD still lacked

clear criteria for such prioritization, undermining proactive risk management (GAO, 2021).

Another critical gap is the underutilization of data systems like FAPIIS and CPARS, which track contractor compliance issues, including trafficking violations (C. Johnson, 2019). ERM principles, as outlined in *OMB Circular A-123*, emphasize leveraging data for forward-looking risk identification (OMB, 2016). While the CTIP PMO's 2022 Acquisition Resource Kit encourages FAPIIS reviews, adoption remains inconsistent, with one contracting officer stating, "Many contracting officers don't search FAPIIS for TIP violations unless mandated by DFARS" (contracting officer, personal communication, February 13, 2025). The GAO (2024b) reported that nine of 12 evaluated contracts failed to meet anti-trafficking requirements, such as missing certifications, indicating a failure to identify known risk triggers. These deficiencies in pre-award risk identification expose the DoD to the risk of awarding contracts to vendors with trafficking histories, compromising CTIP objectives.

b.   *Risk Identification in Award Phase (Contract Award and Onboarding)*

The award phase, spanning contract selection, signing, and contractor onboarding, is a brief but critical window for identifying TIP risks in the DoD's overseas construction contracts. An ERM-aligned approach requires verifying new information about the selected contractor and finalizing plans to address identified risks before performance begins. Currently, the DoD's CTIP practices in this phase are limited, with minimal additional risk scanning beyond ensuring that contractors submit required compliance plans and certifications as mandated by FAR 52.222-50 (2025b). The GAO (2024b) found that contracting officers often fail to request or review these plans unless they are voluntarily provided; in one instance, four of six compliance plans did not meet federal requirements yet went undetected (GAO, 2024b). One contracting officer highlighted this gap, stating, "We sometimes treat the contractor's CTIP plan as a checked box during proposals, without verifying its actionability at award" (contracting officer, personal communication, October 23, 2024). This lack of systematic verification leaves the DoD vulnerable to initiating contracts without adequate anti-trafficking safeguards.

Furthermore, the award phase lacks structured processes to ensure stakeholders are informed of TIP risk factors as contracts commence. ERM principles emphasize convening government teams to review known risks and assign monitoring responsibilities before work begins (OMB, 2019). However, the DoD does not mandate formal briefings on trafficking risks during contract kickoff, with CORs and program managers often receiving only general guidance. One contracting officer noted, "TIP risks are rarely explicitly addressed during post-award conferences unless the contract is identified as notably high-risk, such as those in conflict zones" (contracting officer, personal communication, October 23, 2024). This inconsistency, coupled with the GAO's (2024b) finding that the DoD lacks mechanisms to re-check emerging risk factors at award, limits proactive risk identification, increasing the likelihood of undetected trafficking vulnerabilities as contracts move into performance.

c. Risk Identification in Post-Award Phase (Contract Performance)

The post-award phase, encompassing contract performance, administration, and closeout, requires ongoing TIP risk identification to detect human trafficking or forced labor in the DoD's overseas construction contracts. An ERM-integrated approach demands continuous surveillance, such as unannounced site inspections and worker interviews, to identify emerging risks, particularly in high-risk projects employing third-country nationals. Currently, the DoD's CTIP strategy relies predominantly on passive, ad hoc mechanisms, primarily whistleblower reports or personnel observations, as mandated by FAR 52.222-50 (2025b), which requires reporting suspected violations via the IG hotline or chain of command. The CTIP PMO has bolstered awareness through TIP indicator checklists and training to help personnel recognize abuse (Dixon et al., 2024). However, this approach is predominantly reactive, addressing issues only after they occur. One contracting officer noted, "Detection often hinges on someone spotting overt trafficking signs and reporting them, rather than proactive measures" (contracting officer, personal communication, October 23, 2024). This reactive posture limits the early detection of trafficking risks.

Systematic surveillance for TIP during contract performance remains limited. The GAO (2014) found that while some high-risk contracts incorporate monitoring, many

lack it, warning that "the lack of monitoring could inhibit agencies' ability to detect potential abuses" (p. 31). ERM principles advocate structured checks, such as labor condition audits, especially for large-scale base support contracts in Southwest Asia (OMB, 2019). Yet, DoD policy does not mandate universal CTIP-specific audits. The Army's 2022 CTIP *Job Aid* provides contracting officers with reactive steps, including interview questions and trafficking indicators, for use after suspicions arise (GAO, 2021). One CTIP expert stated, "Proactive inspections typically depend on a commander's initiative or an IG inquiry, not standard oversight plans" (CTIP expert, personal communication, March 14, 2025). This inconsistency limits the DoD's ability to identify trafficking risks systematically during contract execution.

Beyond internal oversight, the DoD underutilizes external information sharing to enhance post-award risk identification. ERM emphasizes integrating diverse data sources to inform risk profiles (OMB, 2019). Research underscores that interagency coordination and leveraging external information sources are vital for effective CTIP efforts (DoD, 2014). Reports from NGOs or the Department of State's *TIP Report could highlight risks*, such as recruiters linked to debt bondage, yet the DoD lacks formalized processes to channel this intelligence into contract management (GAO, 2014). The CTIP PMO participates in interagency working groups, but field-level application remains inconsistent (GAO, 2024b). One contracting official noted, "External risk data rarely reaches us systematically" (contracting official, personal communication, January 29, 2025). These gaps in continuous, data-driven risk identification hinder proactive mitigation, undermining the USG's zero-tolerance policy and increasing the risk of undetected trafficking during contract performance.

2. **Phase 2: Risk Assessment**

Risk Assessment, the second phase of ERM, involves analyzing and prioritizing identified TIP risks to determine their likelihood and impact on the DoD's overseas construction contracts. This phase enables contracting officers to allocate resources effectively and tailor mitigation strategies. *OMB Circular A-123* requires agencies to assess and analyze the identified risks to establish a risk profile, ideally assigning risk levels (e.g., low, medium, high) based on factors like contract location, workforce

characteristics, and contractor history (OMB, 2016). Despite the USG's zero-tolerance policy, DoD's current CTIP practices lack formal risk assessment mechanisms across the contract life cycle, as highlighted in Section B, Findings. DoD's structured risk assessments for service contracts, shown in Figure 8, focus on performance and cost risks but exclude TIP risks, a significant gap where human trafficking risks could be integrated into existing analytical models. This subsection evaluates the DoD's approach to assessing trafficking risks in the pre-award, award, and post-award phases, identifying deficiencies that hinder proactive risk management.

Risk Analysis Model – Tying it Together

1. What is the LIKELIHOOD an event will occur?

Level	What is the Likelihood the Risk Event will occur?
a	Remote
b	Unlikely
c	Likely
d	Highly Likely
e	Near Certainty

2. What is the IMPACT if the event occurs?

LIKELIHOOD (rows e, d, c, b, a) vs **IMPACT** (columns a, b, c, d, e)

- e: M M H H H
- d: L M M H H
- c: L L M M H
- b: L L L M M
- a: L L L L M

R HIGH – Unacceptable. Major disruption likely; different approach required; priority management attention required.

Y MODERATE – Some disruption; different approach may be required; additional management attention may be needed.

G LOW – Minimum impact; minimum oversight needed to ensure risk remains low.

	Technical Performance	And/ or	Schedule	And/ or	Cost	And/ or	Impact on Other teams
a	Minimal or no impact		Minimal or no impact		Minimal or no impact		None
b	Acceptable with some reduction in margin		Additional resources required; able to meet need dates		<5%		Some impact
c	Acceptable with significant reduction in margin		Minor slip in key milestones; not able to meet all need dates		5-7%		Moderate impact
d	Acceptable; no remaining margin		Major slip in key milestone or critical path impacted		7-10%		Major impact
e	Unacceptable		Can't achieve key team or major milestone		>10%		Unacceptable

Figure 8.   Risk Analysis Model in Current-State DoD Services Contracts. Source: DoD (2012).

In the pre-award phase, the DoD does not integrate formal TIP risk assessments into acquisition planning. FAR and DFARS policies, including the $550,000 threshold for compliance plans under FAR 52.222-50 (2025b), treat all qualifying contracts uniformly without differentiating risk levels. The GAO (2024b) noted that no reviewed contracts included tailored clauses for high-risk contexts, such as those in Tier 3 countries, indicating a lack of risk-based prioritization. One contracting official stated, "We haven't developed a model to distinguish a high-risk base services contract in

Kuwait from a low-risk supply contract in Germany" (contracting official, personal communication, January 29, 2025). This one-size-fits-all approach misallocates oversight, overemphasizing low-risk contracts while neglecting high-risk ones, contrary to ERM's emphasis on targeted resource allocation (OMB, 2019).

During the award and post-award phases, risk assessment remains limited and reactive. In the award phase, source selection rarely evaluates the robustness of contractors' CTIP plans beyond basic compliance checks, despite FAR 9.104 (2025a) requiring integrity assessments. The GAO (2021) highlighted that the DoD removed training statistics reporting, reducing visibility into personnel preparedness. In the post-award phase, the DoD lacks mechanisms to reassess risks dynamically, with oversight focusing on performance metrics rather than trafficking risks (GAO, 2024b). One CTIP expert noted, "Contract reviews seldom include TIP risk updates unless an incident occurs" (CTIP expert, personal communication, September 25, 2024). These gaps, coupled with incomplete incident reporting (GAO, 2021), prevent the DoD from developing a comprehensive risk profile, undermining effective CTIP risk management.

a. Risk Assessment in Pre-Award Phase

In the pre-award phase, an ERM-aligned risk assessment involves systematically analyzing identified TIP risks to clearly prioritize targeted mitigation strategies for the DoD's overseas construction contracts. This process evaluates the likelihood and impact of trafficking based on contract-specific factors—such as operating in high-risk regions or reliance on third-country nationals—to guide solicitation and award strategies. Currently, the DoD's CTIP practices lack formal risk assessment methodologies, with FAR and DFARS policies, including the $550,000 threshold for compliance plans under FAR 52.222-50 (2025b), applying uniform requirements to all qualifying contracts without differentiating based on actual risk levels or contexts. One contracting officer noted, "We don't rate TIP risks to prioritize a high-risk Kuwait contract over a low-risk one in Germany" (contracting officer, personal communication, October 23, 2024). This uniform approach, contrary to ERM's emphasis on tailored resource allocation (OMB, 2019), risks inadequate oversight for high-risk contracts.

The absence of structured risk assessment also limits the tailoring of contract requirements. ERM principles advocate scaling protections based on assessed risk severity (OMB, 2016). However, the DoD's reliance on standard FAR clauses and pass/fail compliance plan evaluations fails to address varying risk profiles. The GAO (2024b) reported that contracts in high-risk industries, such as construction projects in Southwest Asia, lacked specialized clauses beyond FAR 52.222-50, missing opportunities to implement stronger safeguards. One CTIP expert stated, "We treat compliance plans as a formality rather than assessing their strength for high-risk scenarios" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). This gap undermines the USG's zero-tolerance policy, as the DoD's pre-award processes do not prioritize resources or controls for contracts with elevated trafficking risks, significantly reducing the effectiveness of CTIP measures.

b.   *Risk Assessment in Award/Selection Phase*

In the award phase, ERM-aligned risk assessment involves evaluating the likelihood and severity of TIP risks to inform source selection and contract terms for the DoD's overseas construction contracts. This phase requires assessing the robustness of each offeror's CTIP compliance plan and their past performance to ensure alignment with the USG's zero-tolerance policy. Currently, the DoD's risk assessment is limited, with CTIP-specific risk factors rarely weighted beyond FAR 9.104's (2025a) general integrity and business ethics requirements. The GAO (2024b) found that contracting officers typically consider CTIP plans as pass/fail criteria, without scoring their quality or risk mitigation potential (GAO, 2024b). One contracting officer stated, "We don't have evaluation criteria for CTIP beyond checking that the plan is submitted if required. It's usually pass/fail, not best value points" (contracting officer, personal communication, January 29, 2025). This rudimentary approach, coupled with the DoD's removal of CTIP training statistics reporting (GAO, 2021), reduces visibility into both personnel preparedness and contractors' anti-trafficking measures, undermining ERM's focus on risk-informed decisions (OMB, 2019).

A positive practice is the use of suspension and debarment (S&D) to exclude high-risk contractors with known TIP violations. However, the GAO (2024b) reported no

S&D referrals for trafficking cases across the DoD and three other agencies in FY2022–FY2023, despite DoD IG investigations of some incidents (GAO, 2024b). The lack of referrals suggests a disconnect, indicating either insufficient identification of cases or underassessment of risks that warrant exclusion. One CTIP expert noted, "Unless there's a clear conviction or serious finding, S&D officials are hesitant to act on TIP cases; they require high evidence" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). This conservative approach risks allowing contractors with prior violations to be deemed low-risk enough for awards, particularly for contracts exceeding the $550,000 threshold requiring compliance plans as the FAR 52.222-50 (2025b). Such gaps in risk assessment limit the DoD's ability to prioritize contractors with strong CTIP measures, increasing the potential for trafficking risks to persist into contract performance.

c.   *Risk Assessment in Post-Award Phase*

In the post-award phase, encompassing contract performance, administration, and closeout, ERM-aligned risk assessment requires continuous evaluation of TIP risks to gauge their evolving likelihood and impact on the DoD's overseas construction contracts. This dynamic process involves reassessing whether trafficking risks increase, decrease, or remain stable and identifying new risk factors to uphold the USG's zero-tolerance policy. Currently, the DoD lacks formal mechanisms to reassess TIP risks during contract performance, with oversight prioritizing performance metrics like quality, cost, and schedule over trafficking vulnerabilities. The GAO (2024b) found that quarterly or annual program reviews rarely prioritized trafficking risk status or addressed contractor anti-trafficking compliance certifications requirement. unless an incident is reported. One contracting officer stated, "Contract management reviews cover numerous checklist items—trafficking risk isn't typically included unless an incident occurs" (contracting officer, personal communication, February 13, 2025). This reactive approach, contrary to ERM's focus on ongoing risk profiling (OMB, 2019), limits the DoD's ability to proactively manage TIP risks throughout contract execution.

Moreover, the DoD's risk assessment is undermined by inconsistent data collection, which is essential for evaluating TIP risks. ERM principles require robust data—such as subcontractor workforce size, turnover rates, worker complaints, or site

visit findings—to inform risk profiles (OMB, 2016). The DoD's CTIP guidance mandates reporting and recording credible TIP information (CTIP PMO, 2019), yet the GAO (2021) reported that the Army and the DoD IG failed to log some known violations into databases, excluding them from future risk assessments. One CTIP PMO staff member noted, "Without complete data, we can't accurately assess TIP risk prevalence in our contracts" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). This lapse hinders the DoD's ability to build a comprehensive risk dataset, weakening the accuracy of post-award risk assessments and the effectiveness of CTIP measures.

At an enterprise level, the DoD's ERM process, mandated by *OMB Circular A-123*, rarely identifies TIP explicitly as a distinct enterprise-level risk, thereby limiting leadership attention and targeted resource allocation. The GAO (2024b) highlighted that agencies, including the DoD, have not adopted a systematic approach to managing trafficking risks, suggesting that TIP is not formally elevated in ERM systems (GAO, 2024b). One contracting officer stated, "CTIP is seen as a compliance issue for the human rights office, not a mission risk like cybersecurity or supply chain issues" (contracting officer, personal communication, February 13, 2025). This cultural perspective, viewing CTIP as separate from enterprise risks, contributes to the absence of systematic risk assessment, reducing the DoD's capacity to prioritize TIP mitigation in contract performance.

Table 2 illustrates varying levels of risk appetite and strategic trade-offs that could significantly inform the DoD's CTIP risk management practices. By adopting a clearly defined risk appetite framework similar to the DOL's approach, the DoD can transition from its current reactive stance toward a structured, proactive, and systematic risk assessment model. Clearly defining and explicitly communicating a risk tolerance philosophy—such as cautious or minimalist—can set consistent leadership expectations, better optimize resource allocation, and significantly enhance accountability for managing trafficking risks throughout the contract life cycle. This approach provides a structured foundation for prioritizing and addressing TIP risks, enabling the DoD to proactively intervene before incidents arise rather than respond to them reactively.

Table 2.   Department of Labor Office of Inspector General Risk Appetite
Framework. Source: Department of Labor (2022).

Rating	Risk Taking Philosophy	Tolerance for Uncertainty	Choice	Trade-Off
			When faced with multiple options, how willing are you to select an option that puts this strategic objective at risk?	*How willing are you to trade off this strategic objective against achievement of other strategic objective?*
5 - Open	Will take justified risks	Fully anticipated	Will choose the option that offers the highest return, including accepting the possibility of failure	Willing
4 - Flexible	Will take strongly justified risks	Expect some	Will choose the option that include risks, but will manage the impact	Willing under certain conditions
3 - Cautious	Preference for safe delivery	Limited	Will accept an option with limited risks that are heavily out-weighed by benefits	Prefer to avoid
2 - Minimalist	Intentionally conservative	Low	Will accept an option only if risks are essential, with limited possibility of failure	With extreme reluctance
1 - Adverse	Risk avoidance is a core objective	Extremely Low	Will select the lowest risk option, always	Never

Consequently, post-award risk assessment in the DoD remains incident-driven and informal, lacking systematic quantification. When suspicions arise, officials may informally judge, "We have a serious problem on Contract X," implicitly rating the risk as high at that moment. However, without a triggering event, there is little active risk ranking or reassessment over time. One contracting officer stated, "We don't have a process to regularly reassess TIP risks unless something goes wrong" (contracting officer, personal communication, October 23, 2024). This reactive approach, coupled with the absence of TIP in the DoD's broader risk profile, restricts proactive mitigation, leaving contracts vulnerable to undetected trafficking risks throughout performance.

3.   Phase 3: Risk Response

Risk Response, the third phase of ERM, involves implementing actions to address identified TIP risks—whether by accepting, avoiding, mitigating, or transferring them—

in the DoD's overseas construction contracts. Within the CTIP framework, this phase encompasses all preventive and corrective measures to reduce the likelihood of trafficking and manage incidents when they occur, ensuring alignment with the USG's zero-tolerance policy. *OMB Circular A-123* mandates agencies to respond to risks by developing and executing effective risk treatments (OMB, 2016). For example, the DOL employs risk response strategies aligned with OMB guidance, defining options for avoidance, acceptance, reduction, and sharing, as illustrated in Table 3. Building on the Findings section's critique of reactive practices, this section evaluates the adequacy of the DoD's current CTIP risk responses across the pre-award, award, and post-award phases of the contract life cycle, identifying gaps that hinder effective trafficking prevention and response.

Table 3.   Department of Labor Risk Response Strategies Aligned with OMB Circular A-123. Source: Office of Inspector General (2022).

Risk Avoidance	**Discontinue** operations or activities in a particular area.
	Prohibit unacceptably high-risk activities and process exposures through appropriate policies and procedures.
	Stop specific activities by redefining objectives, refocusing strategic plans and policies, or redirecting resources.
	Screen alternative projects and budgeted investments to avoid off-strategy and unacceptably high-risk initiatives.
	Eliminate risks at the source by designing and implementing internal preventive processes.
Risk Acceptance	**Retain** risk at its present level, taking no further action.
Risk Reduction	**Disperse** financial, physical, or information assets to reduce risk of unacceptable losses.
	Control risk through internal processes or actions that reduce the likelihood of undesirable events occurring to an acceptable level (as defined by management's risk tolerance).
	Respond to well-defined contingencies by documenting an effective plan and empowering appropriate personnel to make decisions; periodically test and, if necessary, execute the plan.
	Diminish the magnitude of the activity that drives the risk.
	Isolate differentiating characteristics of assets to reduce risk of loss through imitation, obsolescence, or other competitive pressures.
	Test strategies and implemented measures on a limited basis to evaluate results.
	Improve capabilities to manage desired exposure.
	Relocate operations in order to transfer risk from once component, in which it cannot be well managed, to another component that can.
	Diversify assets currently implemented for mission and business operations.
Risk Sharing	**Outsource** process or activities through contractual arrangements.
	Delegate risk by entering into arrangements with independent, capable authorities.

a.   Risk Response in Pre-Award Phase

In the pre-award phase, ERM-aligned risk response (i.e., risk mitigation) involves implementing preventive measures to mitigate TIP risks in the DoD's overseas construction contracts before they are awarded. Once potential trafficking risks are identified, even implicitly, the DoD can structure solicitations and contracts to address them proactively. The DoD's primary pre-award CTIP risk responses include FAR and DFARS anti-trafficking clauses, mandatory compliance plans, and annual certifications for contracts exceeding the $550,000 threshold—per FAR 52.222-50—for work

performed abroad (FAR, 2025). These measures aim to ensure contractors establish trafficking prevention programs, such as employee training, recruitment fee prohibitions, and monitoring procedures, while enabling remedies like contract termination for violations, reinforcing the USG's zero-tolerance policy (FAR, 2025). These controls provide a foundational framework to mitigate TIP risks across applicable contracts.

This approach offers notable strengths, including a uniform baseline that contractually binds all contractors to the USG's zero-tolerance policy, with explicit remedies for non-compliance, such as contract termination. It also shifts responsibility to contractors to oversee their supply chains, aligning with due-diligence principles outlined in frameworks like the United Nations' *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (Sherman, 2022). Moreover, the DoD has addressed systemic risks through policy updates, such as refining definitions of prohibited recruitment fees after identifying debt bondage issues, thus demonstrating a feedback loop where identified risks lead to enhanced pre-award controls (GAO, 2014). One contracting official noted, "These policy adjustments show DoD's ability to adapt to known TIP risks, though broader implementation remains a challenge" (contracting official, personal communication, January 29, 2025). This adaptive mechanism strengthens the DoD's pre-award risk response framework, despite limitations explored further in this section.

However, the effectiveness of these pre-award risk responses remains inconsistent. The GAO (2021) found that many contracts failed to meet requirements, such as obtaining compliance plans, indicating a gap in executing risk responses despite their presence. Even when implemented, the quality of compliance plans varies significantly, with some lacking critical elements like worker feedback mechanisms (GAO, 2024b). Yet, contracting officers rarely disqualify offerors for submitting weak plans, treating the risk response as a formality rather than as a robust mitigation tool. One contracting officer admitted, "If the compliance plan was submitted, we usually just trust it meets requirements—we aren't experts in judging these plans" (contracting officer, personal communication, February 13, 2025). This perfunctory application highlights the need for improved guidance and expertise to evaluate and strengthen contractor plans as an effective pre-award risk response measure.

Another significant gap in pre-award risk response lies in contractor vetting and selection. While the DoD excludes formally barred contractors, it does not heavily weigh CTIP considerations beyond these exclusions, as noted in the Risk Assessment section. A more proactive risk response would avoid awarding contracts to firms with any significant history of trafficking issues, even if not formally recorded in exclusion systems. The DOL emphasizes worker-driven social compliance systems, suggesting that robust risk responses involve selecting contractors who empower workers to reduce exploitation risks (Sherman, 2022). One CTIP expert stated, "We're only beginning to incorporate worker-focused vetting principles in DoD's pre-award processes" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). This nascent approach limits the DoD's ability to prioritize contractors with strong anti-trafficking measures, potentially allowing higher-risk firms to secure contracts.

b. *Risk Response in Contract Award and Mobilization*

Once an overseas construction contract is signed, the contractor's CTIP compliance plan, if required, must be activated to align with the USG's zero-tolerance policy. The DoD's roles in the award and mobilization phase are to ensure contractors understand their obligations and establish clear communication channels for reporting issues. A key risk response is the post-award conference, where the government can reinforce critical contract terms. The CTIP PMO provides multilingual materials, such as posters and wallet cards, to raise awareness of workers' rights (DoD, 2014), which contracting officers can distribute. Deploying these materials early in performance serves as a practical deterrent, as informed workers are less vulnerable to exploitation. Some DoD components have standardized this practice, with one contracting official noting, "We always cover TIP in our post-award briefs for contracts in U.S. Indo-Pacific Command—we hand out hotline info and emphasize zero tolerance" (contracting official, personal communication, January 29, 2025). Despite such responsive actions setting a preventive tone from day one, their application remains inconsistent and is not mandated, resulting in some contracts bypassing these preventive steps due to the lack of a uniform post-award CTIP checklist. A 2018 DoD OIG report recommended incorporating CTIP

discussions into standard contract kickoff procedures, but adoption varies by command emphasis (GAO, 2024b), revealing a gap in early enforcement of CTIP measures.

Another critical risk response during this phase is establishing robust roles and oversight structures to mitigate TIP risks. The contracting officer typically designates a COR to oversee daily performance, and for high-risk contracts, assigning a COR with specialized TIP training can enhance risk management. The DoD mandates CTIP training for acquisition professionals, including CORs and contracting officers, every 3 years to equip them with the knowledge to address trafficking issues (DoD OIG, 2019). The GAO (2021) found, however, that many personnel either did not complete the correct training or were unaware of their CTIP responsibilities, indicating a failure in executing this human capital response. One CTIP expert stated, "Untrained CORs weaken our ability to spot TIP risks early in contract performance" (CTIP expert, personal communication, September 25, 2024). In response, the GAO (2021) recommended reinstating training completion tracking, a corrective action the DoD has accepted. Strengthening training compliance and assigning experienced personnel to monitor TIP risks are essential risk responses that require further reinforcement.

Table 4 delineates the general responsibilities of CORs and contracting offices across key contract phases. Clearly defined roles and explicit responsibilities are crucial for effective CTIP oversight and contract management, ensuring accountability in trafficking prevention. Integrating detailed CTIP-specific oversight duties into this framework, such as mandatory TIP risk monitoring and reporting protocols, would further strengthen proactive trafficking risk mitigation, aligning with ERM's emphasis on structured risk response (OMB, 2019).

Table 4. General Responsibilities of CORs and Contracting Offices in DoD Contract Management. Source: DoD OIG (2022).

ACTION	COR/Functional Office	Contracting Office
Conduct market research	Responsible	Assist
Prepare SOW/PWS	Responsible	Assist
Prepare QASP	Responsible	Assist
Prepare IGCE	Responsible	Assist
Prepare GFP list	Responsible	Assist
Develop sources	Assist	Responsible
Prepare solicitation	Assist	Responsible
Conduct pre-bid conference	Assist	Responsible
Evaluate proposals	Assist	Responsible
Award contract	N/A	Responsible
Conduct contract surveillance	Responsible	Assist
Request modifications	Responsible	Assist
Make modifications	Assist	Responsible
Conduct progress meetings	Assist	Responsible
Conduct inspection/acceptance	Responsible	Assist
Evaluate contractor's performance	Responsible	Assist
CPARS input	Responsible/Assist	Responsible

c. Risk Response in Post-Award Phase (Monitoring, Enforcement, and Remediation)

A primary risk response in the post-award phase is rigorous contract monitoring to ensure CTIP compliance in the DoD's overseas construction contracts, reinforcing the USG's zero-tolerance policy. While overlapping with the risk monitoring phase, this response focuses on implementing targeted oversight actions—such as inspections, audits, and performance reviews—specific to anti-trafficking requirements. The DoD's CTIP instruction directs components to integrate CTIP into their oversight processes, though it allows flexibility in execution (DoD OIG, 2019). For example, quality assurance personnel may conduct routine service contract inspections, verifying timely wage payments and adequate housing conditions, while the Army's CTIP *Job Aid* provides a checklist for contracting officers to ensure contractors are not confiscating passports and that TIP awareness posters are displayed (GAO, 2021). These mitigative

responses aim to detect issues early, preventing the escalation of trafficking risks during contract performance.

The effectiveness of monitoring as a risk response, however, remains limited in practice. The GAO (2021) found that oversight was often inadequate, with many CORs lacking the knowledge to effectively oversee CTIP compliance, weakening this critical response. Recognizing this gap, the DoD has initiated improvements to its guidance. The GAO (2021) recommended providing explicit instructions for contracting personnel on performing CTIP oversight, a step toward strengthening monitoring capabilities. One CTIP PMO staff member noted, "We're developing additional training modules with scenarios to guide CORs on what to look for during site visits" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). These efforts reflect the DoD's commitment to bolstering its monitoring response, though consistent implementation across components is essential to ensure early detection of TIP risks in contract performance.

When potential violations are detected, subsequent risk responses involve enforcement against the contractor or individuals alongside remediation for victims. Enforcement actions range from requiring corrective measures, withholding payments, terminating contracts, and initiating suspension or debarment to referring cases for prosecution, while remediation ensures trafficked workers are removed from harm and supported. FAR 52.222-50 equips the DoD with robust remedies: the government can mandate the removal of an employee or subcontractor, withhold payments, terminate the contract for default, or notify the agency's inspector general for further investigation (DoD OIG, 2019). These measures form the cornerstone of the USG's zero-tolerance enforcement response, providing strong tools to address violations and deter non-compliance.

Analysis of enforcement cases reveals that the DoD has applied these responses, though not as vigorously as intended. The GAO (2021) documented two investigations in which the DoD took action against contractors, suggesting contract remedies were implemented, yet Army contracting officers failed to report these incidents as TIP violations in the federal database, reducing enforcement visibility (GAO, 2021).

Additionally, the GAO (2024b) reported zero S&D referrals for TIP in recent years, indicating that the most severe administrative action is rarely used despite its availability (GAO, 2024b). One CTIP expert explained, "We act on convictions or robust evidence of egregious conduct, but short of that, we often rely on contract-level remedies" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). This risk response choice—favoring mitigation within the contract over enterprise-level exclusion via S&D—may reflect either a high threshold for severe actions or a lack of detected cases, potentially allowing risky contractors to persist in the DoD's supply chain.

Remediation for victims is a critical, yet often underemphasized, response in this phase. FAR 52.222-50 requires contractors to stop violations and provide or fund return transportation for trafficked workers, ensuring a form of victim remediation (DoD OIG, 2019). DoD policy aligns with the *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*, which prioritizes victim protection (The White House, 2021). In practice, remediation efforts, such as providing care or restitution, often involve coordination with other entities, including the DOJ for prosecution and NGOs for victim services. The DOL emphasizes addressing root causes and protecting workers as key to an effective anti-trafficking response (Sherman, 2022). The GAO (2014) found that most contractors in their sample provided return transportation to foreign workers at contract end, indicating compliance with this preventive and remedial measure. One CTIP PMO staff member stated, "Ensuring repatriation and support for victims is a step toward justice, but we need to highlight these efforts more visibly in our processes" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). By prioritizing both enforcement and victim-centered remediation, the DoD can strengthen its comprehensive response to TIP risks.

4. Phase 4: Risk Monitoring

Risk Monitoring, as illustrated in Figure 9, involves continuously tracking identified risks, detecting emerging risks, and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented risk responses over time (OMB, 2016). While closely related to certain aspects discussed previously in post-award identification and response, risk monitoring from an ERM perspective emphasizes governance, oversight, and continuous improvement of risk management processes. It ensures that established risk controls

remain effective, risk statuses are systematically monitored, and relevant risk information is collected, analyzed, and regularly reported to management. Within the CTIP context, risk monitoring encompasses oversight at two distinct yet complementary levels: contract-level monitoring of individual contractors' compliance and enterprise-level monitoring of the broader CTIP program's performance across the DoD.
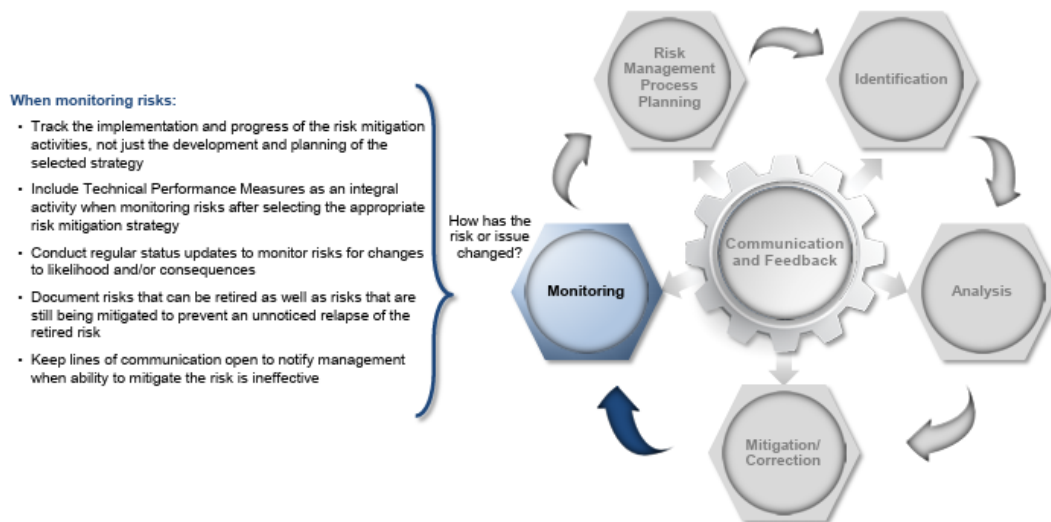
Figure 9. DoD Risk Management Process Planning Cycle (Risk Monitoring). Source: Office of the Executive Director for Systems Engineering and Architecture & Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (2023).

At the contract level, effective CTIP risk monitoring involves systematic surveillance and oversight measures—such as routine audits, inspections, and periodic performance reviews—to ensure compliance with anti-trafficking requirements. This contract-level monitoring verifies that contractors consistently implement agreed-upon risk controls and allows contracting officials to identify and address deficiencies promptly. At the enterprise level, CTIP risk monitoring evaluates program-wide effectiveness, ensuring policies, guidance, and procedures remain relevant, appropriately implemented, and responsive to evolving trafficking risks. This dual-level monitoring approach promotes continuous improvement and accountability, aligning with ERM principles to systematically manage and reduce human trafficking risks across DoD contracting activities.

a. *Monitoring during Contract Performance (Operational Monitoring)*

At the contract level, operational monitoring involves the government's active observation and verification of compliance with CTIP requirements throughout the life cycle of the DoD's overseas construction contracts. This process encompasses the COR's field oversight, regular audits or reviews, and the systematic capture of incidents or risk indicators as data points. However, the DoD's operational monitoring for CTIP remains inconsistent and often minimal unless a specific allegation surfaces. The GAO (2014) concluded that "the lack of monitoring [for TIP] could inhibit agencies' ability to detect potential abuses," noting that while some contracts benefit from systematic processes, others lack any structured oversight (GAO, 2014, p. 31). This patchwork approach highlights a critical gap, as CTIP monitoring is not uniformly embedded within contract management plans, undermining effective risk detection.

Where monitoring does occur, certain strengths are evident, particularly in high-risk locations where proactive practices have emerged. Some combatant commands and contracting units have developed ad-hoc measures, such as requiring contracting teams to conduct housing inspections or interview a sample of workers about their conditions, often driven by commanders with prior exposure to TIP issues. The CTIP PMO Task Force, convening quarterly, facilitates the sharing of such best practices across the DoD, fostering localized improvements (DoD OIG, 2019). Furthermore, following GAO and IG findings, the DoD has updated its guidance, with DFARS procedures now including a TIP compliance checklist under DFARS PGI 222.17 (2025a). This checklist, when utilized by contract administrators, serves as a practical monitoring tool, providing CORs with a concrete list of items to review periodically, such as worker grievance mechanisms and anti-trafficking training compliance, to ensure early risk identification.

Despite these advancements, significant gaps in contract-level monitoring persist, limiting the DoD's ability to manage TIP risks effectively. As previously discussed, an awareness gap among CORs remains prevalent, with many lacking the knowledge or training to monitor CTIP compliance effectively (GAO, 2021). Resource constraints and competing priorities exacerbate this issue, as CORs often juggle multiple responsibilities, and without leadership emphasis, CTIP monitoring is frequently deprioritized. Unlike

safety or cybersecurity, which benefit from dedicated inspections, CTIP lacks similarly institutionalized checks. The DoD OIG's evaluations in contingency areas, such as Kuwait in 2019, repeatedly recommended enhanced contract oversight of labor conditions, underscoring the need for more robust monitoring practices (DoD OIG, 2022). One CTIP expert noted, "Without dedicated resources, CTIP monitoring often falls to the bottom of the COR's list" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). From an ERM perspective, the DoD has yet to fully integrate CTIP into its routine risk monitoring frameworks, as evidenced by the absence of automated alerts for non-compliance, such as a contractor's failure to submit an annual certification, leaving such oversight to individual discretion.

A related challenge is the lack of monitoring for the implementation of risk responses. For example, when a contractor is required to have an anti-trafficking compliance plan, monitoring should verify that the plan is actively executed—ensuring, for instance, that employee training is conducted and a worker hotline is established. Currently, the DoD relies heavily on contractor self-certification, in which contractors annually certify compliance with their plans and report no violations. The GAO (2024b) found that contracting officers are not mandated to proactively request or review these plans or their implementation, meaning the government may only confirm the plan's existence on paper without verifying its effectiveness (GAO, 2024b). One contracting official stated, "We often assume the contractor's self-certification means the plan is working, but we don't check the details" (contracting official, personal communication, January 29, 2025). From an ERM perspective, this step represents an unchecked risk, as the DoD assumes mitigation without verification, leaving potential TIP vulnerabilities unaddressed during contract performance.

b.   *Program-Level Monitoring and Reporting*

At the program level, monitoring evaluates the overall effectiveness of the CTIP program across the DoD, focusing on enterprise-wide metrics such as the number of TIP incidents reported, personnel trained, compliance rates, and program maturity indicators. The CTIP PMO oversees this process through an annual self-assessment, requiring each DoD component to report on CTIP training completion, TIP cases identified, and

program initiatives (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2024). These assessments contribute to an internal yearly report within the DoD and provide data for the attorney general's *Trafficking in Persons* report, to which federal agencies contribute. This reporting system establishes a foundational monitoring structure, utilizing data calls and consolidated reporting to gauge program performance and identify areas for improvement at the organizational level.

However, the accuracy and completeness of this data remain significant challenges, undermining effective risk management. The GAO (2021) revealed that between 2015 and 2020, the DoD IG and the Army exhibited "incomplete reporting of closed TIP investigations," resulting in inaccurate annual self-assessment figures. This incomplete data distorts the enterprise-wide view, leading DoD leadership to underestimate the prevalence of TIP incidents and perceive a lower risk level than reality warrants. Consequently, the need for additional resources or policy adjustments may not be recognized, stunting proactive improvements. One CTIP PMO staff member noted, "If leadership doesn't see the full scope of TIP cases, they can't prioritize the resources we need to address them" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). In response, the GAO (2021) recommended clarifying roles for reporting and ensuring that all required data, such as the number of investigations, is captured, a recommendation the DoD has acted on by defining reporting responsibilities between contracting officers and inspectors general for entering incidents into systems.

Another dimension of program-level monitoring involves oversight by external bodies, such as the GAO and the DoD OIG, which serve as critical checkpoints for the DoD's CTIP risk management. Audits conducted in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2021, and 2024 consistently identified both progress and persistent gaps in the DoD's approach. For example, the GAO in 2014 acknowledged policy improvements but highlighted ambiguity in the implementation of these policies, while in 2024, it reiterated the lack of a systematic risk management approach, underscoring ongoing deficiencies (GAO, 2024b). This external monitoring has been instrumental in prompting the DoD to address shortcomings, driving incremental improvements. However, one CTIP expert emphasized, "We can't rely solely on external audits—internal, continuous monitoring is essential to sustain progress without waiting for the next report" (CTIP expert, personal

communication, March 14, 2025). Developing a robust internal monitoring system capable of proactively identifying trends and gaps is critical to ensure the DoD's CTIP program evolves beyond reactive responses to audits.

5. Phase 5: Risk Communication

Risk Communication, the fifth phase of ERM, involves the systematic sharing of information about TIP risks and risk responses among stakeholders, both vertically and horizontally within the DoD, as well as with external parties when appropriate (OMB, 2016). This often-overlooked yet essential component ensures that relevant stakeholders—from CORs to leadership and across functions like contracting, legal oversight, and the CTIP PMO—are informed in a timely and transparent manner, enabling risk-informed decision-making. In the CTIP context, risk communication encompasses internal reporting channels to escalate findings, cross-functional coordination to align efforts, and external reporting to oversight bodies, Congress, or the public, fostering accountability and collaboration in trafficking prevention. This section evaluates the DoD's risk communication practices, identifying gaps that hinder effective information flow and coordinated responses to TIP risks across the contract life cycle.

a. *Internal Communication and Reporting*

Effective internal communication ensures that when a CTIP risk or incident is identified at the operational level in the DoD's overseas construction contracts, it is promptly escalated to the appropriate management and oversight levels for action. The DoD has clearly established reporting channels for this process: If a COR suspects an incident of human trafficking, they must immediately inform the agency inspector general and law enforcement authorities when appropriate, in addition to reporting the issue through their chain of command, such as the contracting officer and the commander, in accordance with established internal procedures (DoD, 2021). This structured reporting pathway enables swift communication to stakeholders who can initiate investigations or implement remedies, ensuring that TIP risks are addressed efficiently at various organizational levels.

Despite a robust policy framework for reporting, communication breakdowns in practice have hindered timely escalation. The GAO (2021) identified confusion over reporting responsibilities, noting that Army contracting officers failed to report two contractor actions to the federal database due to unclear guidance on whether it was their duty or another entity's responsibility. This lapse in internal communication often stems from assumptions that other parties will handle reporting, leading to delayed or incomplete actions. One CTIP expert stated, "Unclear roles lead to missed opportunities—we need to know exactly who reports what and when" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). To address this, the GAO (2021) recommended clarifying reporting roles to strengthen communication lines, a step the DoD has begun to implement to improve the flow of TIP-related information.

Cultural hesitancy further complicates effective risk communication within the DoD. Some personnel are reluctant to report TIP issues due to fear of repercussions. As one CTIP PMO staff member explained, "Contracting folks may not want to broadcast that there's a trafficking issue on their contract; there can be a tendency to quietly fix it rather than report it up, out of fear of blame" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, September 25, 2024). *OMB Circular A-123* emphasizes the importance of an open and transparent culture where risks can be communicated without fear of reprisal (OMB, 2016). To combat this stigma, the CTIP PMO has promoted a culture of responsibility, emphasizing that reporting suspected trafficking is a duty and recognizing that CORs who proactively address TIP risks, such as those who identify and halt violations, serve as models of effective risk management, demonstrating the importance of vigilant oversight in trafficking prevention. These efforts aim to foster an environment where TIP risks are reported transparently and addressed collaboratively.

Another critical aspect of internal communication is cross-functional coordination, as CTIP incidents intersect multiple domains, including contracting, legal, law enforcement, and victim support. The DoD's process flow, illustrated in Figure 10, outlines how information on a contractor incident should flow to the IG for investigation, potentially to law enforcement, and to the suspension & debarment official (SDO) in parallel, ensuring all relevant parties are informed (CTIP PMO, 2021). Early inclusion of the SDO, for example, enables preventive administrative actions, such as suspension, at

the outset of an investigation rather than post-conviction. However, the GAO (2024b) reported that SDO offices received no TIP allegation referrals in FY2022–FY2023, suggesting that even when IGs investigated cases, this information often failed to reach SDO offices through official channels (GAO, 2024b). One CTIP PMO staff noted, "We sometimes only learn of cases from news or GAO reports rather than through official channels, which delays our response" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). This gap in lateral communication underscores the need for a more integrated ERM framework to facilitate automatic sharing of TIP risk information across stakeholders, ensuring coordinated and timely action.

Incident reporters can include:
- Victims
- Chain of command
- DOD Office of the Inspector General (DODIG) Hotline
- Military lawyers
- Outside observers/third-parties
- Other DOD agencies
- National Trafficking in Persons Resource Center Hotline
- Local law enforcement

Incident takers can include:
- Chain of command
- DODIG or other agency Inspector General
- Military lawyers
- DOD law enforcement
- Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Program Management Office

First responders are either military police or a special investigator

1. Report Incident "Incident Reporter"

2. Document Incident "Incident Taker"

3. Preliminary Investigation

4. Refer Case

Criminal Cases

Non-Criminal Cases

5. Civilian criminal code review "Department of Justice"

5. Non-criminal case review "contracting officer or their representative"

6. Prosecution

6. Investigation and administrative determination

7. Conviction and sentencing

7. Remedy determination and documentation

Recommend 1 or more of the following:
1. Remove contract employee
2. Terminate a subcontractor
3. Withhold contract payment
4. Withhold award fee
5. Do not exercise contract option
6. Terminate contract
7. Refer to suspension and debarment official
8. Take no action

8. Document in a national database

8. Document in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

Figure 10.   The DoD's Process for Receiving and Responding to an Alleged TIP Incident Involving a Contractor. Source: GAO (2021).

b.   *External Communication and Transparency*

External risk communication involves sharing CTIP-related information with stakeholders beyond the DoD, including oversight agencies, other federal entities, Congress, and the public, to enhance transparency and collaboration. The DoD fulfills its obligations by providing data on investigations and actions for the attorney general's

Annual Report on U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking, as well as participating in forums like the OMB's interagency task force on trafficking and the President's Task Force on TIP, where it communicates its efforts and challenges (DOJ, 2021). These platforms enable the DoD to engage with external stakeholders, ensuring that its CTIP initiatives and risk management strategies are visible and aligned with broader federal anti-trafficking efforts, fostering interagency coordination and accountability.

However, the GAO (2024b) has identified significant gaps in the DoD's external communication, noting that agencies, including the DoD, failed to consistently "communicate … anti-trafficking requirements" across all levels, impeding effective risk management (p. 23). This includes ensuring that compliance information reaches leadership to inform decision-making. For instance, the DoD previously required reporting on CTIP training metrics, such as the percentage of personnel trained, but discontinued this practice after 2018, depriving leadership of a critical risk indicator—the workforce's readiness to identify and address TIP (GAO, 2021). One CTIP PMO staff member stated, "Without training data, leadership can't see where we're vulnerable—it's a blind spot in our risk picture" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, September 25, 2024). The GAO (2021) recommended reinstating training metrics reporting to improve upward communication regarding risk mitigation status, a step the DoD has agreed to implement, which should enable senior leaders to better address training gaps as a risk factor.

Transparency with the public represents another critical dimension of external communication, yet the DoD's approach remains limited. Major TIP violations in DoD contracts typically become public only when legal action is pursued, while administrative actions, such as debarments, are rarely widely publicized. Advocates argue that greater disclosures—such as listing contractors debarred for trafficking or providing anonymized summaries of investigation outcomes—would enhance accountability and drive systemic improvements. The DoD could further contribute by publicly identifying high-risk sectors within its contracting operations, a practice not currently formalized. One CTIP expert noted, "Public reporting of risk assessments could build trust and show DoD's commitment to combating trafficking" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October

22, 2024). Adopting periodic public reporting of CTIP risk assessments, as proposed in this framework, could strengthen external engagement, demonstrate leadership, and encourage proactive risk mitigation across stakeholders.

6. Integrated Gap Synthesis

The analysis across the five ERM phases and three contract life cycle stages reveals a pattern of uneven integration of risk management principles into the DoD's CTIP program, with a reactive rather than preventive focus. Table 5 systematically maps each ERM phase against the pre-award, award, and post-award stages, summarizing key strengths (√) where the DoD has implemented measures and gaps (✕) where enhancements are needed. While the DoD demonstrates strengths in policy frameworks and enforcement tools, particularly in the Risk Response phase, significant gaps persist in proactive risk management, especially in Risk Identification, Assessment, and Monitoring, limiting the program's effectiveness in preventing TIP in overseas construction contracts.

Table 5.   Mapping ERM Phases to DoD Contract Life Cycle Stages in the Current CTIP Risk Management Approach

ERM Phase | Contract Stage	Pre-Award (Planning & Solicitation)	Award (Contract Finalization)	Post-Award (Performance & Close-Out)
Risk Identification	√ Standard TIP clauses included in all relevant solicitations and contracts. ✕ No formal risk profiling of contracts for TIP vulnerabilities. ✕ Inconsistent use of past performance data (FAPIIS/CPARS) to flag prior TIP issues.	✕ Limited new identification essentially assumes risks identified during pre-award carryover. ✕ No requirement to re-check for emerging risk factors at the time of award.	✕ Reliance on ad-hoc incident reporting; no continuous surveillance plan in most contracts. ✕ Lack of field assessments to proactively detect trafficking indicators.
Risk Assessment	✕ No CTIP risk level assigned to acquisitions. ✕ CTIP plan evaluation is pass/fail, not a graded risk factor in source selection.	✕ Contractor selection does not explicitly weigh TIP risk aside from basic responsibility checks. √ Contractors with known severe violations are likely excluded via suspension/ debarment.	✕ No routine reassessment of trafficking risk as the contract evolves. ✕ Incomplete data on incidents leads to an underestimation of risk.
Risk Response (Mitigation)	√ Anti-trafficking clause and compliance plan requirements embedded in contracts. ✕ Quality control of compliance plans is	√ Post-award conferences sometimes reinforce CTIP requirements and distribute awareness materials (if done). √ Assignment of trained	√ Strong enforcement tools are available: contract termination, withhold payments, personnel removal, and S&D referrals. √ Some use of remedies has occurred.

ERM Phase | Contract Stage	Pre-Award (Planning & Solicitation)	Award (Contract Finalization)	Post-Award (Performance & Close-Out)
	weak. ✗ No enhanced requirements for high-risk contracts beyond the standard clause (one-size-fits-all).	CORs and inclusion of CTIP in their duties. ✗ Not consistently executed – CTIP is often not emphasized during contract kickoff.	✗ Monitoring-based mitigation is weak – if issues aren't detected, responses can't activate. ✗ S&D seldom used as a deterrent (few referrals), potentially limiting accountability.
Risk Monitoring	✗ No explicit CTIP monitoring plan in acquisition strategy; relies on later oversight.	✗ Minimize the time during the award, aside from ensuring documents are in order.	✓ Some contracts/commands implement TIP checks as part of QA surveillance. ✗ COR oversight of CTIP compliance is often lacking due to unclear guidance. ✗ Program-level monitoring is incomplete: not all incidents are tracked in databases, and training metrics are not fully reported.
Risk Communication	✓ FAR clause and requests for proposals (RFPs) communicate expectations to bidders. ✗ No mechanism to communicate assessed risk level to approving officials – leadership not specifically briefed on TIP risk for acquisitions.	✓ Award documents and kick-off meetings (if utilized), communicate roles. ✗ Informal communication depends on individual contracting officer emphasis; no standard CTIP briefing requirement exists.	✓ Established reporting channels (IG hotline, chain of command) for incidents. ✗ Gaps in upward communication: Some violations are not reported or entered into systems. ✗ Lateral communication gaps: S&D officials and others are unaware of ongoing cases. ✗ Limited external transparency on CTIP issues in contracts.

As Table 5 illustrates, the DoD's CTIP program features foundational strengths, such as established policy frameworks, anti-trafficking clauses, and enforcement powers, which are most evident in the Risk Response phase and in communicating expectations to contractors. However, these strengths are predominantly reactive, focusing on later-stage responses rather than early prevention. Significant gaps persist, particularly in the proactive phases—Risk Identification, Assessment, and Monitoring—where the absence of systematic risk profiling, risk level assignment, and consistent oversight hampers the DoD's ability to prevent TIP incidents. This imbalance results in a program that appears compliant on paper but struggles to mitigate risks effectively in practice, particularly in high-risk overseas contracting environments.

Expert interviews reinforced these findings, consistently highlighting the need for a more structured, risk-based approach to CTIP. Contracting officers and CTIP experts indicated that the current approach often feels like 'checking the box' rather than proactively managing risks in the field, reflecting a lack of proactive risk engagement (contracting officer and CTIP expert, personal communication, February 13, 2025). There

was broad agreement on the need for improved tools to identify high-risk contracts, implement more consistent monitoring practices, and establish greater transparency in reporting to enhance accountability. One CTIP PMO staff member emphasized, "We have the policies and the will, but we need a framework that connects the dots—from training the people, to monitoring the contracts, to holding folks accountable—all under a risk management umbrella" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). This perspective underscores the critical need for a more integrated ERM approach to address systemic gaps in the DoD's CTIP program.

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that integrating ERM principles into the DoD's CTIP program would likely address many of the identified gaps, shifting the program's stance from reactive to preventive. By treating trafficking in contract supply chains as a risk that requires continuous management, the DoD can enhance its ability to mitigate TIP vulnerabilities effectively. The next section proposes a new ERM-integrated CTIP framework that builds on these insights, aiming to strengthen each ERM phase: introducing systematic risk identification and assessment in the pre-award phase, enhancing risk response and monitoring throughout the contract life cycle, and improving communication and governance of TIP risks to ensure a more cohesive and proactive approach.

D. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR ERM-INTEGRATED CTIP RISK MANAGEMENT

This section transforms the previously identified gaps into a structured, risk-based CTIP framework, outlining specific screening tools, monitoring protocols, governance responsibilities, and performance metrics designed for enterprise-wide implementation within the DoD. Based on the earlier analysis, this proposed framework integrates ERM principles comprehensively into the DoD CTIP program throughout the entire contracting life cycle. By embedding ERM systematically, the framework shifts the focus of CTIP from its current compliance-driven approach to a proactive, risk-informed management process that anticipates and mitigates trafficking vulnerabilities effectively while maintaining decisive enforcement of the zero-tolerance policy when violations occur.

The proposed ERM-integrated CTIP framework is structured around the five core ERM phases—Risk Identification, Risk Assessment, Risk Response, Risk Monitoring,

and Risk Communication—and strategically embeds these phases into each stage of contract management (pre-award, award, post-award). This integration ensures continuous and systematic risk management from the planning and solicitation stage through contract finalization and the subsequent performance and close-out phases. As detailed in Appendix B, Table 12, ERM integration opportunities across the contract life cycle reveal that pre-award planning, contract award, and performance monitoring phases represent the highest priority areas for systematic improvement. Figure 11 visually represents this integrated approach, illustrating the alignment and interplay between ERM activities and the DoD contracting life cycle. The figure highlights how risk management processes are embedded at critical points within the contract timeline.
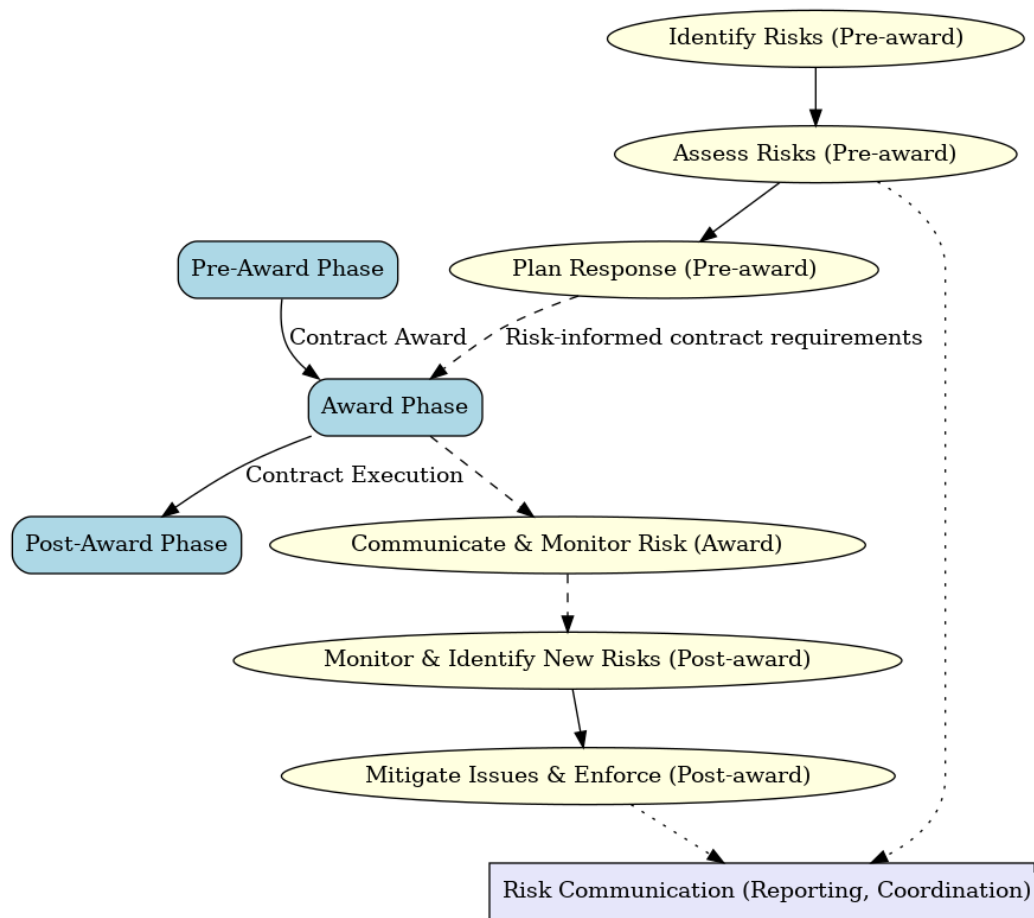

Figure 11.   Proposed ERM-Integrated CTIP Framework for DoD Contracting.

Note. The yellow ovals represent the five ERM phases, and the blue boxes represent the three contract management stages (Pre-Award, Award, and Post-Award)

By adopting this ERM-integrated framework, the DoD aims to enhance its capability to proactively identify and mitigate trafficking risks, strengthen oversight mechanisms, ensure consistent and clear risk communication, and foster a culture of accountability and transparency. The detailed framework presented in the subsequent sections outlines practical tools and protocols to support these objectives, promoting a cohesive and proactive approach to combating trafficking risks in overseas construction contracts.

1. Key Features of the ERM-Integrated Framework

The proposed framework introduces a series of targeted features and process enhancements at each contract stage, leveraging identified strengths while systematically addressing gaps to strengthen CTIP risk management:

- **Pre-Award Risk Screening and Profiling:** All planned contracts will undergo a mandatory CTIP risk screening using a standardized Trafficking Risk Assessment Tool, evaluating factors such as the country's TIP tier ranking, sector-specific risks (e.g., construction versus IT services), contract value, labor size, employment of third-country nationals, and contractor past performance on CTIP compliance. Each contract will be assigned a risk level (low, medium, or high), which must be documented in the acquisition plan or risk register. Contracts rated medium or high will trigger additional risk responses, ensuring early identification of trafficking vulnerabilities and enabling tailored mitigation strategies from the outset.

- **Risk-Based Mitigation Measures in Solicitations:** Pre-award teams will customize solicitation requirements based on the contract's risk profile, embedding risk-informed criteria into the procurement process. For high-risk contracts, RFPs may mandate enhanced CTIP plans beyond FAR minimums, requiring offerors to include measures such as independent audits of recruitment agencies, additional worker safeguards, or on-site compliance officers. Source selection plans will evaluate CTIP risk management approaches by assigning technical evaluation points for robust anti-trafficking plans or demonstrated past performance in worker welfare, incentivizing competitive excellence and addressing the gap where CTIP was previously a pass/fail criterion. This approach positions strong CTIP performance as an indicator of a lower-risk, higher-responsibility contractor, aligning with ethical compliance models, and in extreme cases, enables risk avoidance strategies, such as excluding high-risk subcontracting tiers, to strengthen contract integrity upfront.

- **Enterprise CTIP Risk Register and Governance:** The framework establishes an Enterprise CTIP Risk Register, maintained by the DoD CTIP PMO in collaboration with component acquisition executives, to log identified CTIP risks and high-risk contracts across the DoD. This register will be regularly reviewed by an expanded governance body, such as the CTIP Task Force, augmented with acquisition and IG representatives, ensuring senior leadership visibility. For instance, if multiple

contracts in a region are rated high risk, the register will flag this trend, prompting the Task Force to allocate targeted resources, such as deploying a special inspection team or providing CTIP support contractors to assist KOs and CORs. Thus, institutionalizing CTIP within the DoD's governance structure ensures systematic oversight, which elevates CTIP to the level of critical enterprise risk management, similar to cybersecurity and safety.

- **Enhanced Training and Role Definition:** To bolster risk response, the framework mandates specialized training for personnel assigned to high-risk contracts, requiring acquisition professionals (KOs and CORs) to complete an advanced CTIP oversight course. Appointment letters for these roles will explicitly outline CTIP monitoring duties, addressing the awareness gap by ensuring individuals understand their responsibility as the "eyes and ears" of CTIP compliance. A DAU professor noted, "Clear role definitions empower CORs to prioritize trafficking prevention" (DAU professor, personal communication, October 10, 2024). This initiative creates a cadre of CTIP-competent acquisition staff, enhancing oversight capabilities and ensuring consistent risk management across contracts.

- **Continuous Monitoring Plan:** For each medium- or high-risk contract, the COR, in collaboration with the contracting officer and the contractor, will develop a CTIP Monitoring Plan as part of the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP), formalizing proactive oversight. This plan will include monthly labor condition assessments, quarterly unannounced visits to worker housing or worksites, verification of contractors' worker feedback channels, and semi-annual meetings with randomly selected workers (without management present) to address concerns directly. The plan will specify data collection requirements, such as the number of employees interviewed and discrepancies noted, and establish a reporting schedule, ensuring monitoring is systematic and not left to chance, thereby strengthening risk detection throughout contract performance.

- **Incident Response Workflow and Tracking:** Upon suspicion or confirmation of a TIP incident, the framework standardizes a response workflow with defined communication steps, ensuring coordinated action. Any incident triggers immediate notification to a centralized CTIP Incident Team—comprising legal, investigative, contracting, and DoD CTIP PMO representatives—to oversee parallel actions: investigation by Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) or relevant agencies, coordination with law enforcement if criminal, suspension of payments if warranted, victim care through liaising with DOS or NGOs for shelter, and consideration of contractor suspension pending investigation. A DoD CTIP PMO case manager will track each incident's progress and outcomes, logging all incidents and actions in the CTIP Risk Register (with sensitivity for ongoing investigations), capturing lessons learned to inform risk reassessment for similar contracts. This structured approach builds on the existing case process flow from Figure 6 by adding a formal team and tracking mechanism, ensuring no steps are missed, accountability is thorough, and real-time updates to senior officials are provided.

- **Metrics and Reporting Enhancements:** The framework introduces key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure CTIP program effectiveness in risk management, including the percentage of high-risk contracts with CTIP monitoring plans, the

number of TIP incidents detected proactively versus through external reports, the average response time from incident identification to completion of contractor remedial actions, and the percentage of personnel trained on schedule. These KPIs will be reported quarterly to the CTIP Task Force, annually to DoD leadership, and in external reports, enabling the DoD to assess progress over time, such as increased proactive detections indicating effective monitoring, and enhance transparency with oversight bodies. One contracting official stated, "These metrics would give us a clear benchmark to track our risk management impact" (contracting officer, personal communication, February 13, 2025), underscoring their role in driving continuous improvement.

- **Interagency and Industry Collaboration:** As part of a broader risk communication strategy, the framework promotes regular engagement with other agencies and industry partners to share best practices and align anti-trafficking efforts. The DoD should actively participate in the OMB Procurement Task Force on TIP, contributing data from its CTIP Risk Register to shape government-wide initiatives, and host annual industry days or working groups with major contractors to communicate CTIP risk expectations and address implementation challenges. One CTIP PMO staff member highlighted, "Engaging contractors directly ensures they see CTIP as a shared goal, not just a mandate" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). This two-way communication fosters practical mitigation strategies and encourages contractor buy-in, enhancing the framework's effectiveness across the DoD's supply chain.

2. Expected Improvements and Addressing Gaps

Implementing the ERM-integrated CTIP framework is anticipated to yield substantial improvements, addressing critical gaps identified in the existing CTIP management approach:

- **Proactive Prevention:** By identifying high-risk contracts early, enhancing solicitation requirements, and implementing rigorous oversight, the DoD can prevent many TIP incidents before they occur. For instance, a contractor aware of the DoD's commitment to random worker interviews is deterred from practices like passport withholding, knowing violations will likely be detected. Such identification directly addresses the reactive versus proactive gap, shifting the focus toward prevention and aligning with presidential and congressional mandates to not only punish trafficking but to preempt it, as emphasized in prior GAO (2014) assessments. One CTIP PMO staff member noted, "Proactive measures like these create a deterrent effect that changes contractor behavior from the start" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025).

- **Visibility and Accountability:** The Enterprise CTIP Risk Register and performance metrics provide leadership with continuous visibility of TIP risks, comparable to other critical risk areas such as cybersecurity. Regular reporting will highlight stalled progress or spikes in incidents, enabling timely corrective actions, while transparent accountability ensures that omissions, such as a high-risk contract lacking a

monitoring plan, are visible and addressed. One contracting official stated, "With these metrics, we can't hide from the data—it forces us to act" (contracting official, personal communication, January 29, 2025). This heightened visibility empowers the DoD to prioritize resources effectively, addressing the gap where leadership often lacked comprehensive TIP risk insights.

- **Culture Change:** Embedding ERM principles into the CTIP program fosters a culture where trafficking risk becomes a shared organizational responsibility across the DoD, extending beyond the DoD CTIP PMO to involve commanders and contracting leaders in mission-critical risk management in overseas contracts. Over time, CTIP considerations can become as ingrained as safety protocols, empowering personnel to report risks without hesitation, in line with the OMB's (2016) advocacy for open communication cultures. Interviews revealed that many personnel are eager to contribute but need clarity on their roles; one CTIP expert remarked, "This framework provides the playbook they've been waiting for, with the support to act confidently" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). This cultural shift addresses the gap where CTIP was often siloed as a compliance issue rather than emphasized as a mission priority.

- **Improved Compliance and Deterrence:** A risk management focus paradoxically strengthens compliance by signaling to contractors that the DoD is vigilant and proactive, encouraging them to invest in robust measures like enhanced staff training and recruiter audits, which reduce TIP risks. High-profile enforcement actions, such as suspensions or contract terminations, will significantly amplify deterrence, sending a powerful and clear message throughout the contracting community and industry, as the GAO (2014) has noted that inconsistent monitoring weakens the government's ability to signal accountability. By combining risk response and communication, these actions reinforce zero tolerance with tangible consequences, addressing the gap where enforcement lacked visibility and impact. This dual approach ensures contractors prioritize compliance as a risk mitigation strategy, not just a regulatory obligation.

- **Alignment with Federal ERM Initiatives:** Integrating CTIP into ERM aligns the DoD's efforts with broader federal management goals under *OMB Circular A-123*, elevating CTIP within the DoD risk portfolio alongside other priorities in agency risk reviews and annual performance reports. This alignment positions CTIP as a strategic concern, justifying resource allocation to mitigate identified risks and ensuring long-term sustainability. By transforming CTIP from a niche compliance topic to an integrated management priority, the DoD can secure the necessary support to sustain its anti-trafficking efforts, addressing the gap where CTIP often lacked enterprise-level prioritization and funding.

In conclusion, this ERM-integrated CTIP framework offers a comprehensive, evidence-based solution to bolster the DoD's efforts against human trafficking in overseas contracting, building on existing compliance components—laws, policies, and clauses—while introducing a dynamic management system that learns and adapts. The chapter's analysis diagnosed critical shortcomings in the DoD's current approach, and

this proposed framework provides a targeted remedy, incorporating recommendations from the GAO, the DoD OIG, and best practices across federal and civil society sectors. Implementation would require phased commitment, but the result would be a DoD CTIP program that not only meets legal requirements but also embodies true vigilance, safeguarding worker rights and operational integrity through diligent enterprise risk management.

E.   SUMMARY

This chapter has critically analyzed the current state of the DoD's CTIP program in overseas construction contracts, highlighting a pronounced strength in enforcement mechanisms but significant weaknesses at the proactive front end of the risk management cycle. The analysis identified three systemic gaps within the DoD's existing approach:

- **Inadequate Risk Identification and Assessment:** Presently, contracts are uniformly treated as equally risky, lacking formal criteria to systematically identify and flag high-risk sectors, geographic locations, or specific vendors. Consequently, prevention strategies rely predominantly on standardized contractual clauses rather than targeted risk intelligence, limiting information-driven proactive risk mitigation.
- **Inconsistent Risk Monitoring:** Oversight activities by CORs, comprehensive data capture, and structured program-level dashboards remain fragmented and unevenly implemented. As a result, emerging trafficking problems frequently remain undetected until identified through external audits or whistleblower reports, significantly impairing timely response and proactive intervention.
- **Fragmented Risk Communication:** The current framework suffers from ineffective internal reporting channels, incomplete documentation of incidents, and siloed information management. These deficiencies obstruct leaders, S&D officials, and interagency stakeholders from accessing an integrated and accurate view of trafficking risks, consequently hindering coordinated and decisive action.

To address these critical gaps, the chapter proposed a robust ERM-integrated CTIP framework that introduces systematic contract-level risk screening, structured continuous monitoring plans, a comprehensive enterprise-wide CTIP risk register, and strengthened governance structures. These mechanisms would effectively elevate trafficking concerns from mere compliance obligations to proactive mission-critical risk management considerations within the DoD.

Chapter V builds on this foundation by benchmarking the proposed ERM-integrated framework against the DOL Office of Inspector General's ERM maturity

model. It delineates specific governance milestones, performance indicators, and phased implementation steps, clearly mapping out the resource requirements necessary for successful integration across the DoD's acquisition enterprise.

V. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

> On this World Day against Trafficking in Persons, let us redouble our efforts to detect, protect and support survivors and leave no trafficking victim behind. Together, let us build a world where no one can ever be bought, sold, or exploited.
>
> António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General (2023)

A. INTRODUCTION

This research aimed to develop a systematic framework for managing human trafficking risks in DoD contracts, with a particular emphasis on forced labor within overseas construction services, addressing a pressing need for enhanced risk management in federal procurement. The study was motivated by a critical gap identified by oversight bodies, notably the GAO (2024b), which found that the DoD lacks a structured, enterprise-wide approach to identify and mitigate TIP risks in its contracting practices. Recent GAO (2024b) assessments underscore that none of the evaluated federal agencies, including the DoD, have implemented a systematic approach encompassing risk identification, analysis, response development, and communication of trafficking risks that are essential for upholding a zero-tolerance stance. To bridge this gap, this capstone research aligned the DoD's CTIP efforts with federal ERM principles as outlined in *OMB Circular A-123*, ensuring a proactive and integrated approach to trafficking prevention (OMB, 2016).

Drawing on the evidence presented in Chapter IV, the primary finding is that the DoD's current CTIP processes are fragmented, lacking cohesion across the contract life cycle, and that integrating these processes into an ERM-aligned framework can effectively address these deficiencies. By embedding systematic risk identification, analysis, response, communication, and monitoring into each contract phase, the proposed framework shifts the DoD's approach from reactive enforcement to proactive prevention, enhancing its capacity to manage TIP risks in overseas contracting. This integration not only strengthens oversight but also fosters a culture of accountability, ensuring that trafficking risks are addressed at every stage of procurement.

To achieve this objective, the study employed a qualitative methodology, combining document analysis—encompassing laws, regulations, policy guidance, and audit reports—with insights from expert interviews to evaluate the DoD's current practices. Chapter IV systematically mapped the DoD CTIP PMO processes against the OMB ERM framework, identifying key shortcomings in the risk management of forced labor within DoD contracts. This chapter concludes the research by synthesizing the central findings, presenting actionable recommendations, evaluating implications for the DoD CTIP PMO at the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and identifying avenues for future research while also reflecting on the study's limitations and its broader significance for ethical procurement practices within the DoD.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: Section B synthesizes the key insights and conclusions from the analysis; Section C addresses the primary and secondary research questions, linking findings to the proposed framework; Section D provides actionable recommendations to enhance policy and practice in the DoD's CTIP program; Section E explores the implications for the OSD CTIP PMO, focusing on its evolving role in risk governance; Section F identifies areas for future research to expand the framework's applicability; Section G acknowledges the study's limitations in scope and methodology; Section H offers final reflections on the ethical and strategic significance of the framework; and Section I summarizes the chapter's contributions to trafficking prevention and ethical DoD procurement.

B.   INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The empirical evidence presented in Chapter IV reveals critical deficiencies in the DoD CTIP program's approach to managing TIP risks across the contract life cycle for overseas construction services. First, without a contract portfolio scanning tool to proactively identify potential trafficking indicators, risk detection is predominantly incident-driven, rendering high-exposure acquisitions indistinguishable from low-risk ones until after contract award. Second, the risk assessment stage lacks granularity, as compliance plans are evaluated on a binary pass/fail basis, resulting in uniform oversight and resource allocation for contracts with vastly different labor supply profiles, thus hindering tailored risk mitigation.

Third, organizational feedback mechanisms are deficient, with CORs lacking standardized CTIP surveillance duties and completed investigations inconsistently uploaded to federal databases like FAPIIS or CPARS, obstructing institutional learning and allowing repeat offenders to evade scrutiny. Finally, continuous monitoring prioritizes post-incident remedies over proactive audits or data analytics, failing to channel enforcement lessons back into earlier life cycle phases for preventive action. Collectively, these findings underscore that aligning CTIP procedures with the ERM cycle—encompassing systematic identification, assessment, response, monitoring, and communication—would transform the DoD's reactive compliance regime into a proactive, risk-informed process, enabling comprehensive TIP risk management across all contract stages.

C. BENCHMARKING THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OIG ERM FRAMEWORK

Figure 12 illustrates the DOL OIG's seven-step ERM model, a robust benchmark for assessing risk management maturity.

Figure 12.   Department of Labor OIG ERM Framework.
Source: OIG (2022).

Mapping the findings from Chapter IV against this model reveals that the DoD performs adequately in Steps 5 (Respond to Risks) and 6 (Monitor and Review), demonstrating strengths in remedial action and episodic review, yet remains at an initial maturity level for Step 1 (Establish Context), Step 2 (Identify Risks), Step 3 (Analyze Risks), Step 4 (Develop Alternatives), and step 7 (Continuous Risk Identification and Assessment). Specifically, the DoD lacks a formal risk-appetite statement to guide CTIP decision-making (Step 1), does not systematically score contracts for TIP exposure (Steps 2–3), and fails to integrate incident data into an enterprise dashboard for real-time reassessment (Step 7). Addressing these maturity gaps requires adopting key features of the DOL OIG framework, such as context-setting through a risk-appetite statement, implementing contract-level risk-scoring tools, and establishing a live CTIP risk register to enable dynamic risk management (OIG, 2022).

Table 6 maps the DoD's current CTIP practices against the seven-step DoL-OIG ERM framework to identify implementation gaps and their operational implications.

Table 6.   DoD CTIP Gaps versus DOL-OIG ERM Best Practices

ERM Step (DOL OIG)	Best-Practice Expectation	Observed DoD CTIP Practice	Principal Gap / Implication
Establish Context	Risk appetite formally articulated and linked to mission objectives.	Zero-tolerance policy exists, but no CTIP risk-appetite statement or linkage to enterprise risk profile.	CTIP perceived as a narrow compliance issue rather than a mission-critical risk.
Identify Risks	Portfolio-wide scan using standard indicators (sector, location, labor profile, contractor history).	Reliance on clause insertion; no systematic contract-level risk flags.	High-exposure contracts not differentiated early; preventive resources misallocated.
Analyze Risks	Quantitative/ qualitative scoring to prioritize oversight.	Compliance plans evaluated on a binary pass/fail basis; likelihood and impact not rated.	Oversight intensity unrelated to actual trafficking exposure.
Develop Alternatives	Tailored mitigations (enhanced clauses, due-diligence audits, governance options).	One-size-fits-all clauses; limited tailoring beyond	Missed opportunity to embed stronger safeguards in high-risk solicitations.

		dollar-value thresholds.	
Respond to Risks	Mitigations executed; accountability enforced.	Strong contractual remedies (termination, withholds) available and used in some cases.	Effectiveness depends on incident detection; deterrent impact limited.
Monitor & Review	Routine performance metrics and lessons-learned cycles.	COR oversight inconsistent; training and incident metrics incompletely reported.	Weak feedback loop; leadership lacks a complete operational picture.
Continuous Identification & Assessment	Live data feed into risk register; strategy updated dynamically.	Incident data sporadically entered; no enterprise CTIP dashboard.	Inability to forecast hotspots or adjust controls in near-real time.

As Table 6 highlights, the analysis revealed three critical insights into the alignment of ERM with CTIP needs in the DoD's overseas construction contracts. First, the DoD's current approach to trafficking risk management remains fragmented and inconsistent, confirming the systemic gaps identified in earlier chapters. Despite a formal zero-tolerance stance and the inclusion of anti-trafficking clauses in contracts, enforcement and oversight are largely ad hoc, with key requirements, such as obtaining and reviewing contractor compliance certifications and plans or monitoring subcontractor labor practices, often neglected, as evidenced by GAO (2024b) findings that most reviewed contracts lacked full compliance with anti-trafficking provisions. This inconsistency arises from the absence of an integrated risk management system, in which responsibilities for addressing TIP risks are diffused and lack a unifying framework, leading contracting officials to treat TIP requirements as a checklist item rather than a proactive mitigation strategy across the contract life cycle. Consequently, vulnerabilities persist, particularly in labor-intensive projects with multi-tier subcontracting in regions like USCENTCOM, where forced-labor exploitation risks are heightened due to complex supply chains and third-country national labor (GAO, 2024b).

Second, applying an ERM lens to the DoD's CTIP program can significantly enhance risk management effectiveness. Chapter IV's mapping of CTIP PMO activities to the ERM framework identified gaps at each stage: In the risk-identification phase, the

DoD lacks a formal process to analyze its contract portfolio for trafficking risk indicators such as contract location, value, or migrant labor recruitment; an ERM-aligned approach would implement regular risk assessments to flag high-risk contracts, such as those in Tier-3 jurisdictions or involving labor brokers (GAO, 2024b). In the risk analysis and response-planning phases, while policies prohibit trafficking, there is little guidance on crafting tailored mitigation plans for specific risk scenarios; ERM integration would enable risk-response strategies like stricter subcontractor audits or worker-welfare checks in higher-risk contracts, with clear risk owners assigned for implementation. Risk communication is also underdeveloped, as trafficking risks and incidents are not routinely aggregated or escalated to senior leadership; ERM principles advocate for communicating significant risks and mitigation status to decision-makers, ensuring informed resource allocation. Finally, continuous monitoring and review of risk controls—a core ERM tenet—are weak, with limited feedback on anti-trafficking measures' effectiveness and lessons learned not systematically captured; ERM's iterative monitoring would enable regular compliance evaluations through audits and site inspections, updating risk profiles accordingly. One CTIP expert emphasized, "ERM's structured approach offers a roadmap to shift from reaction to prevention, ensuring trafficking risks are managed holistically" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024).

Third, the proposed ERM-integrated framework provides a practical model for the DoD, unifying existing anti-trafficking tools—contract clauses, training programs, and compliance plans—within a comprehensive risk management cycle. The framework introduces a CTIP risk registry within the DoD's ERM system, enabling evaluation, documentation, and tracking of TIP risks for each major contract or program. It also incorporates *OMB Circular A-123* guidance on internal controls and risk governance by recommending mechanisms like a cross-functional CTIP risk working group and the inclusion of trafficking risk in enterprise-risk committees, ensuring anti-trafficking measures are embedded across all contracting phases, from pre-award planning to Post-award performance monitoring (OMB, 2016). These measures address the diverse dimensions of TIP risk—legal, ethical, operational, and reputational—offering a systematic approach to mitigation that aligns with the GAO's (2024b) call for a

structured risk management process. By adopting this framework, the DoD can enhance its capacity to prevent and respond to forced labor in its contracts, fostering ethical procurement practices.

D.   STUDY FINDINGS ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section synthesizes the findings from Chapter IV to address the primary and secondary research questions, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the DoD's current CTIP practices and the potential for an ERM-integrated framework to enhance trafficking risk management in overseas construction contracts. By examining the alignment of the DoD's processes with ERM principles, the following responses highlight systemic gaps, propose actionable solutions, and underscore the need for a proactive, risk-informed approach to prevent TIP incidents across the contract life cycle. As detailed in Appendix B, Table 11, the persistence of unaddressed GAO recommendations from 2014 through 2024 demonstrates the critical need for the systematic risk management approach proposed in this research. Each question is addressed with evidence-based insights, culminating in a crosswalk that links findings to specific recommendations for implementation.

1.   How Can the DoD Develop and Implement a Systematic Approach to Managing Human-Trafficking Risks in Its Procurement Processes?

In response to the primary research question (PQ), the analysis in Chapter IV confirmed that the DoD's existing CTIP controls are static and compliance-centered, lacking a proactive mechanism to address TIP risks in overseas construction contracts. A systematic approach emerges by embedding trafficking prevention within the DoD's ERM cycle, ensuring a structured and iterative risk management process. The study identifies key design features to achieve this systematic approach: a contract-portfolio screening tool that scores exposure using objective indicators such as contract location, value, and labor profile; an enterprise CTIP risk register integrated with the *OMB Circular A-123* dashboard for centralized risk tracking; and quarterly performance metrics reported to senior leadership to inform decision-making. Together, these mechanisms establish a continuous loop of identification, assessment, response,

monitoring, and reassessment, transforming a reactive program into a preventive one that proactively mitigates TIP risks across the contract life cycle (GAO, 2024b; OIG, 2022).

2.   **What Are the Current Practices and Limitations in the DoD's Approach to Identifying and Analyzing Trafficking Risks in Its Procurements?**

The DoD's current approach to identifying and analyzing TIP risks relies heavily on FAR 52.222-50 and the statutory compliance-plan threshold of $550,000 for foreign services, lacking a granular risk differentiation mechanism. No standard indicator set is applied during acquisition planning, resulting in solicitations above this threshold receiving identical clause language, regardless of whether they involve high-risk third-country national labor in a Tier-3 jurisdiction or low-risk white-collar services. Contracting officers interviewed confirmed they "check the clause" but undertake no structured pre-award risk appraisal, reflecting a binary approach that produces oversight blind spots, particularly in USCENTCOM construction contracts where multi-tier subcontracting and labor-broker chains heighten trafficking vulnerabilities (Morris et al., 2021). To address this limitation, the study proposes a screening matrix that scores each planned acquisition on exposure indicators—such as sector risk, geographic location, and contractor history—and feeds these scores into the acquisition strategy and source-selection plan to enable risk-informed decision-making.

3.   **How Effective Are the DoD's Current Responses to Identified Trafficking Risks in Contracts?**

The DoD's current responses to identified TIP risks include extensive legal remedies—payment withholds, contract terminations, personnel removal, and SDO referrals—which have proven decisive in the limited instances in which they were invoked. However, GAO (2024b) audits indicate fewer than a dozen trafficking-related contract actions over a decade, despite independent NGO reports suggesting a higher incident prevalence, highlighting an underutilization of these remedies. Interviews revealed that contracting officials hesitate to impose severe penalties without investigative confirmation, and low investigative caseloads stem from the absence of proactive detection mechanisms, rendering responses largely retrospective. One

contracting official noted, "We often wait for clear evidence, which delays action and reduces our impact" (contracting official, personal communication, January 29, 2025). The proposed framework introduces graduated enforcement to address this gap: formal warnings and corrective-action plans for first-time deficiencies, escalating to SDO actions for repeat or egregious violations, coupled with earlier detection through risk-tiered monitoring to enhance deterrence and responsiveness.

4. **What Challenges Exist in Communicating Trafficking Risks and Mitigation Strategies to Contracting Officials?**

Two significant information bottlenecks impede effective communication of TIP risks and mitigation strategies within the DoD. First, closed investigations are not consistently uploaded to CPARS or FAPIIS, obscuring prior violations during source selection and limiting visibility for contracting officials. Second, lateral notification between investigative units and SDO offices is inconsistent, with SDO staff reporting they often learn of trafficking cases from public GAO (2024b) reports rather than internal channels, delaying accountability measures. One CTIP PMO staff member stated, "Without real-time data sharing, we're always playing catch-up on risks" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). These gaps prevent field officers and award authorities from calibrating surveillance or enforcing accountability effectively. The study's proposed CTIP dashboard addresses this problem by automating data ingestion from investigations, audits, and training records, providing real-time visualization of risk clusters, contractor histories, and compliance status for all stakeholders, thereby ensuring timely and informed decision-making (M. V. Johnson, 2020).

5. **How Can the DoD Improve Its Monitoring and Review Processes for Anti-Trafficking Compliance in Contracts?**

The DoD's monitoring and review processes for anti-trafficking compliance are undermined by the absence of TIP-specific checkpoints in QASPs, with CORs citing a lack of directive guidance on labor-condition inspections or worker interviews, leading to inconsistent oversight. The ERM-integrated model addresses this by embedding CTIP tasks into COR appointment letters, mandating advanced oversight training for CORs

assigned to medium- and high-risk contracts, and requiring quarterly unannounced site visits and worker interviews to proactively identify violations. Results from these inspections will populate the enterprise CTIP risk register, where automated analytics flag anomalous patterns, such as recurring labor issues in specific regions or contracts. Continuous improvement is institutionalized through quarterly CTIP performance reviews, enabling the DoD to adjust surveillance frequency and mitigation actions based on data trends, which ensures a dynamic and responsive monitoring system (Renzetti et al., 2015). One CTIP expert emphasized, "Structured monitoring transforms oversight from sporadic to systematic, catching risks before they escalate" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024).

6. How Does the Current DoD CTIP PMO Process Align With the OMB ERM Framework?

Gap mapping against the DOL OIG's seven-step ERM model reveals that DoD CTIP practices meet maturity criteria for Step 5 (Respond to Risks) and Step 6 (Monitor and Review), reflecting strengths in response execution and periodic review, but remain at an initial maturity level for Steps 1 (Establish Context), 2 (Identify Risks), 3 (Analyze Risks), 4 (Develop Alternatives), and 7 (Continuous Risk Identification and Assessment). Specifically, the DoD lacks a formal risk-appetite statement to contextualize CTIP decision-making, does not conduct contract portfolio scans to identify risks, fails to analyze risks with weighted mitigation strategies, and has no live dashboard to cycle incident data back into strategy for continuous reassessment. The crosswalk in Table 7 introduces these missing components—context-setting, risk identification tools, and a dynamic risk register—thereby elevating CTIP governance to an optimized ERM tier and aligning with best practices for systematic risk management (OIG, 2022).

Table 7.   Crosswalk of Research Questions, Evidence, Insights, and Recommendations

Research Question	Key Evidence (Chapter 4)	Insight Reference	Corresponding Recommendation
Primary Research Question	CTIP Process Flow Diagram; Integrated Gap Map	ERM alignment converts reactive	R1: Pilot ERM-integrated model in USCENTCOM; R6: Enterprise risk register

Research Question	Key Evidence (Chapter 4)	Insight Reference	Corresponding Recommendation
		program to preventive system	
Secondary Research Question 1	Pre-award detection findings; interview dataset	Fragmented detection and minimal risk assessment rigor	R2: Contract portfolio screening tool
Secondary Research Question 2	Enforcement case studies; GAO enforcement statistics	Post-incident focus and under-utilized remedies	R3: Graduated FAR and DFARS enforcement enhancements
Secondary Research Question 3	Risk communication audit; S&D interview statements	Weak feedback loops	R4: CTIP dashboard and automated data-sharing protocol
Secondary Research Question 4	Monitoring practices; COR testimony	Inadequate continuous monitoring	R5: Risk-tiered QASP checkpoints, advanced COR training, quarterly audits
Secondary Research Question 5	Integrated Gap Map; DOL OIG benchmark comparison	Limited alignment with ERM Steps 1–4 and 7	R6: Governance integration, risk-appetite statement, and maturity-tier migration

E.   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Building on the insights and conclusions, this section provides clear and actionable recommendations for implementing the ERM-integrated CTIP risk management framework, with a focus on DoD construction services contracts within the USCENTCOM area of responsibility. These recommendations aim to strengthen policy and practice, ensuring that anti-trafficking efforts are systematic, sustainable, and aligned with enterprise-wide risk management principles to effectively mitigate TIP risks across the contract life cycle.

1.   Pilot an ERM-Integrated CTIP Risk Management Program in USCENTCOM Construction Contracts

The DoD should initiate a pilot program to apply the proposed ERM-integrated framework to construction services contracts in the USCENTCOM region, a high-risk area with a history of labor violations. As a proof of concept, a select group of new and

ongoing contracts, such as base construction or maintenance projects in Kuwait and neighboring countries, should undergo the full ERM-aligned risk management process (Aldaiyat, 2021). This involves conducting structured risk assessments for each contract—evaluating factors like recruitment practices, country TIP rankings, subcontractor tiers, and past performance on labor standards—followed by developing tailored mitigation plans and tracking risks throughout contract execution. One CTIP expert noted, "Piloting in CENTCOM allows us to test the framework where oversight is most critical" (CTIP PMO expert, personal communication, September 25, 2024). The pilot's measurable outcomes, including the number of risks identified and mitigated, reductions in compliance violations, and improvements in contractor adherence to labor standards, should be rigorously documented and analyzed. If successful, this pilot can serve as a scalable template for broader implementation across other regions and contract types, enhancing the DoD's anti-trafficking efforts systematically (Spalding, 2017).

2. Integrate OMB Circular A-123 ERM Principles Into CTIP PMO Processes

The CTIP PMO should formally adopt ERM principles as part of its operating procedures, aligning with *OMB Circular A-123*'s guidance on risk management. This integration means embedding risk management activities into the CTIP program's planning and execution. Concretely, the CTIP PMO, in collaboration with acquisition officials, should establish a risk governance structure for trafficking in persons. For example, a standing CTIP Risk Management Working Group can be created that convenes stakeholders from contracting, legal, compliance, and operational units to review trafficking risk assessments and responses on a regular basis.

Also, the PMO should develop standardized risk assessment tools for contracting officers and commanders, enabling them to rate the TIP risk level of contracts and contractors at the operational level. The OMB ERM framework's emphasis on leadership oversight also implies that CTIP risk metrics should be reported up the chain by incorporating trafficking risk status into the DoD's broader risk reporting mechanisms (such as risk registers or dashboards presented to senior leadership). By institutionalizing these practices, managing TIP risk becomes a routine part of procurement oversight

rather than an external add-on. This recommendation leverages existing ERM infrastructure in the DoD to drive consistency, for instance, aligning CTIP risk controls with internal control assessments already required under A-123. Over time, this integration will build an organizational culture that views human trafficking risk as an enterprise risk to be managed with the same rigor as financial or security risks (Broad et al., 2020).

3. Strengthen and Update FAR/DFARS Anti-Trafficking Clauses and Compliance Requirements

Regulatory updates are essential to address the identified enforcement gaps and loopholes in the DoD's anti-trafficking framework. FAR 52.222-50, Combating Trafficking in Persons, and its corresponding DFARS provisions should be revised to mandate more robust compliance measures. A critical change is requiring contracting officers to actively obtain and approve contractor anti-trafficking compliance plans and certifications for all contracts above a specified risk threshold, such as large overseas service contracts exceeding $550,000. Currently, while the FAR mandates compliance plans for such contracts, GAO (2024b) findings indicate that officials frequently fail to request or examine these plans, with many plans lacking required elements. Assigning explicit responsibility in the FAR/DFARS for contracting officers or contract monitors to verify and annually review these plans will enhance accountability. One CTIP PMO staff member noted, "Updated clauses with clear oversight duties will ensure compliance is actionable, not just theoretical" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, October 9, 2024).

Furthermore, the regulations should introduce minimum standards and surveillance requirements, such as mandating contractors to conduct and document annual TIP training for workers and subcontractors and requiring government contract administrators to perform yearly on-site labor condition audits for contracts in high-risk locations (Austen & Seymour, 2009). Additionally, the FAR/DFARS should clarify and strengthen reporting requirements for TIP incidents, specifying procedures and timelines for escalating violations to federal databases, and thereby addressing the GAO's (2021) observation of inconsistent reporting that obscures leadership visibility. To complement

these changes, the DoD should revise its contract management guidelines, such as the *Defense Contingency Contracting Handbook* or service-specific manuals, to reflect these enhanced requirements, equipping contracting personnel with a clear understanding of their role in CTIP compliance monitoring.

4. Develop a Centralized CTIP Risk Dashboard for Monitoring and Decision-Making

To enhance oversight and interagency transparency, the DoD should develop a centralized CTIP Risk Dashboard accessible to key stakeholders across the department and potentially to other federal agencies involved in overseas contracting. This digital platform will aggregate and display real-time data on trafficking risk indicators and compliance status for DoD contracts, serving as a vital decision-support tool (M. V. Johnson, 2020). The dashboard will include metrics such as the number of contracts in each combatant command with high TIP risk ratings, the status of contractor compliance plan submissions and approvals, training completion rates for contracting personnel and contractors, records of TIP allegations, investigations, and outcomes, and key risk indicators like the number of workers repatriated due to labor issues or audit findings of labor non-compliance. One CTIP expert stated, "A dashboard gives us a real-time view of risks, making oversight proactive rather than reactive" (CTIP expert, personal communication, September 25, 2024).

By visualizing these data, the DoD CTIP PMO and senior leaders can identify trends and outliers, such as recurring issues at a specific base or with a particular contractor, enabling informed and timely interventions. The dashboard supports risk communication—an essential ERM element—by providing a common operating picture of TIP risks, fostering accountability through transparent performance tracking across contracting commands (M. V. Johnson, 2020). Its design can draw on interagency best practices, such as those from the DOS or USAID, for tracking human rights compliance, and the DoD CTIP PMO could partner with research institutions like NPS to prototype this tool, ensuring it functions as an executive decision-support system akin to financial risk dashboards, thereby advancing data-driven anti-trafficking efforts.

5. Implement Continuous Improvement Mechanisms in CTIP Risk Management

Adopting an ERM-based framework requires an ongoing continuous improvement commitment to adapt to evolving TIP threats and incorporate lessons learned. The DoD should embed iterative strategies into its CTIP risk management practices, ensuring the framework remains dynamic and responsive (Riskonnect, 2025). For instance, after the first year of implementing new measures—such as the pilot program, updated clauses, and dashboard—the DoD CTIP PMO should conduct an after-action review to evaluate their effectiveness and identify challenges and use metrics from the dashboard and compliance reports to assess outcomes like risk reduction or compliance improvements. If certain risk indicators, such as a surge in third-tier subcontracting, reliably predict labor infractions, these indicators should be prioritized with enhanced controls; conversely, ineffective mitigation actions should be adjusted. The DoD can institutionalize a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle for CTIP: planning by setting annual risk management objectives (e.g., reducing incidents by a specified percentage), doing by implementing policies and training, checking by reviewing audits and data monitoring, and acting by updating the program based on findings.

Additionally, as more data accumulates on trafficking risks in contracts, the DoD should refine risk identification and profiling techniques, developing sophisticated models that factor country TIP rankings, contract value, sector, and contractor past performance. Regular updates to training curricula and guidance, informed by observed trends and recent TIP cases, will keep the workforce vigilant (Renzetti et al., 2015). Onecont CTIP expert highlighted, "Continuous improvement ensures we evolve with the threat, staying one step ahead of traffickers" (CTIP expert, personal communication, October 22, 2024). This approach mirrors ERM's ethos of iterative risk evaluation, aligning with quality management practices in other fields, and enables DoD to proactively close loopholes and address emerging trafficking tactics.

6. Broaden DoD Risk Management Policy to Encompass Contracting Human Trafficking Risks

The DoD should revise its overarching risk management policies and guidance to explicitly include ethical and human-centric risks like TIP throughout the contract life cycle, elevating trafficking from a compliance issue to a mission-critical risk. Traditionally, DoD risk management guidance, such as the *Risk Management Framework for DoD Acquisitions*, has focused on programmatic risks in major weapon systems or IT systems, emphasizing cost, schedule, and performance. The department should update relevant directives or issue a new DoD Instruction delineating responsibilities for CTIP risk oversight at various levels (OSD, military departments, combatant commands, defense agencies), integrating these duties into existing risk governance channels (Tindall et al., 2022).

This policy shift formally recognizes TIP as a risk warranting structured management, embedding CTIP risk considerations into acquisition strategy documents, program risk reviews, and contract performance evaluations. One CTIP PMO staff member noted, "Including TIP in risk policies signals its importance to the entire acquisition workforce" (CTIP PMO staff member, personal communication, March 14, 2025). An updated risk management policy framework spanning *from factory to foxhole*—covering the entire supply chain from labor sourcing to operational use—will institutionalize protections against forced labor, providing a top-level mandate that ensures the longevity of the proposed recommendations beyond individual leadership tenures.

F. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE OSD CTIP PMO OFFICE (PROPOSED FRAMEWORK)

The OSD CTIP PMO, as the central entity overseeing DoD-wide anti-trafficking initiatives, will undergo a significant transformation with the adoption of the proposed ERM-integrated framework, shifting its focus from policy-setting and training to a more operational risk management role in combating TIP risks in overseas construction contracts. This transition requires the PMO to take a proactive stance in overseeing the implementation of risk assessments, mitigation tracking, and reporting, as outlined in the

framework's recommendations. To operationalize this shift, the OSD CTIP PMO must champion the establishment of recommended governance structures, such as the CTIP Risk Working Group and an interagency dashboard, fostering collaboration across the DoD. Close coordination with stakeholders, including contracting offices in each service and combatant command, the Defense Pricing, Contracting, and Acquisition Policy (DPCAP) office, and the DoD IG for enforcement and investigations, will be essential to ensure alignment and drive a unified approach to TIP risk management.

A key practical implication is the need for the OSD CTIP PMO to enhance its capabilities and resources to support this expanded role. This may involve training existing staff or recruiting personnel with risk management expertise to complement the PMO's human trafficking specialists, ensuring a balanced team capable of integrating ERM practices into CTIP activities. The PMO could establish a dedicated risk integration team to focus on embedding ERM principles, such as systematic risk identification and mitigation, into its operations. Additionally, adopting the framework necessitates updating the PMO's guidance documents and tools, including revising the DoD CTIP instruction or issuing new handbooks that provide contracting personnel with step-by-step guidance on conducting risk assessments and monitoring. The PMO will also need to develop standardized metrics and templates for the proposed CTIP risk register and dashboard, ensuring consistent data collection and reporting across the DoD's vast organizational structure, a critical step for scaling the framework effectively (M. V. Johnson, 2020).

In terms of policy influence, the OSD CTIP PMO is uniquely positioned to drive the recommended updates to the FAR/DFARS and internal DoD policies, leveraging its authority to advocate for systemic change. The PMO can collaborate with the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council to propose DFARS amendments that strengthen anti-trafficking clauses, such as mandating contractor compliance plans as a deliverable for government review, which would address identified gaps in enforcement (GAO, 2024b). Within the OSD, the PMO should advocate for a directive or inclusion in the DFARS PGI to formalize risk-based monitoring requirements, ensuring consistency in oversight practices. Given its existing engagement with external partners like the DOS TIP Office and the interagency CTIP Task Force, the PMO can share the ERM-integrated framework

concept to harmonize approaches across agencies, potentially integrating the proposed risk dashboard into federal best practices through coordination with the Federal Acquisition Security Council or OMB, thereby amplifying the dashboard impact on trafficking prevention (The White House, 2021).

Another critical implication is the need for robust change management and outreach led by the OSD CTIP PMO to secure buy-in from contracting officers, commanders, and contractors. The PMO should develop targeted awareness campaigns and training modules that articulate the ERM-integrated approach, emphasizing its benefits—such as enhanced risk prevention and streamlined compliance—and clarifying new responsibilities for stakeholders. These campaigns could include hosting workshops at acquisition conferences or integrating ERM for CTIP modules into annual training, ensuring widespread adoption. The PMO must clearly communicate that this framework is not an additional bureaucratic layer but a mechanism to strengthen and systematize existing anti-trafficking efforts, aligning with *OMB Circular A-123* and GAO (2024b) recommendations to secure leadership support and foster a culture of accountability (OMB, 2016).

In summary, adopting the proposed ERM-integrated framework positions the OSD CTIP PMO as a proactive risk governance body, orchestrating the integration of regulations, policies, and ERM practices to create a comprehensive, defense-wide approach to TIP risk management. By executing these changes effectively, the PMO can significantly elevate the DoD's capacity to prevent forced labor in its supply chains, translating high-level policy into impactful on-the-ground practice. This evolution fulfills the PMO's core mandate of ensuring that the USG zero-tolerance stance on human trafficking is operationalized, while positioning the DoD as a leader in innovative risk management for ethical procurement, safeguarding both human rights and operational integrity.

G.   AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study developed and recommended an ERM-based CTIP framework within a targeted scope for the DoD's overseas construction contracts, numerous avenues remain for further inquiry to expand and refine its application across diverse contexts.

Future research can build on this foundation by exploring innovative approaches, broadening the framework's scope, and evaluating its effectiveness, ultimately enhancing the DoD's capacity to combat TIP risks in public procurement. The following areas outline key directions for advancing this work.

1.   Expansion to Other Contract Types and Sectors

Subsequent studies should investigate how the ERM-integrated CTIP framework can be adapted beyond construction services in USCENTCOM to other high-risk contract categories within the DoD's procurement portfolio. This includes service contracts such as base operations support, security services, or logistics, which often involve large numbers of low-wage foreign workers, as well as supply contracts for goods like uniforms or electronics, which often involve forced labor in global supply chains and pose significant risks. Each sector presents unique risk factors and operational constraints; for example, logistics contracts may involve transient labor forces, while supply chains for electronics may span multiple tiers with opaque labor practices. Case studies across these domains can help generalize the framework while tailoring its application to sector-specific challenges. Additionally, testing the framework in peaceful environments or different geographic theaters, such as U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) or U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), can reveal how contextual factors like regional labor regulations or geopolitical stability influence its implementation, providing a comparative analysis to enrich understanding of the framework's versatility and limitations across diverse operational settings.

2.   Advanced Monitoring Technologies and Data Analytics

A promising area for future research lies in leveraging advanced technologies to enhance the detection and prevention of TIP risks in DoD contract performance. Studies could explore the integration of data analytics, machine learning, and artificial intelligence to analyze contract data for early indicators of trafficking vulnerabilities (Moody's, 2022). For instance, machine learning models could predict high-risk contracts by analyzing historical incident data collected through the proposed CTIP dashboard, identifying patterns such as frequent subcontractor changes or labor-intensive projects in

high-risk regions. Researchers might also investigate blockchain technology for supply chain transparency, using immutable ledgers to track goods and labor across tiers, potentially exposing unauthorized subcontracting or abusive practices. Furthermore, the development of digital worker feedback tools, such as secure smartphone apps for anonymous reporting of grievances or trafficking indicators, warrants exploration. Pilot projects employing internet of things (IoT) devices, such as biometric systems to verify worker consent or GPS tracking to prevent movement restrictions, could be evaluated for effectiveness while addressing privacy concerns, pushing CTIP risk management toward a predictive and preventive paradigm through technological innovation.

3.   Quantitative Metrics and Effectiveness Evaluation

Given the framework's introduction of new processes, future research should focus on developing quantitative metrics to measure its effectiveness and conducting cost–benefit analyses to support its adoption. Studies could design performance indicators, such as a trafficking risk reduction index for contracts, or assess changes in compliance rates and TIP incident occurrences before and after framework implementation. Longitudinal research tracking DoD units or contractors over several years can determine whether the systematic risk approach reduces violations or accelerates incident response times, providing empirical evidence of impact. Additionally, analyzing cost implications, such as expenses for additional oversight personnel or contractor compliance, against benefits like reduced investigations, avoided violations, and enhanced reputation will refine the framework's business case. Researchers might also employ simulation techniques, such as wargaming or system dynamics models, to evaluate the framework's performance under varying conditions, like surge contracting during crises where labor oversight risks may escalate, ensuring evidence-based validation and iterative refinement of the framework's cost-effectiveness (Moody's, 2022).

4.   Cross-Agency and Comparative Studies

TIP in government contracting extends beyond the DoD, presenting opportunities for cross-agency and comparative research to enhance the framework's applicability.

Studies should compare the DoD's framework with those of other agencies, such as the DOS, USAID, or the Department of Homeland Security, which also manage trafficking risks in overseas contracts, to identify best practices and opportunities for harmonization. For example, USAID's community-based monitoring or the DOS's contractor vetting procedures could complement the DoD's ERM approach, while the DoD's lessons with large-scale contractors could inform other agencies. International comparisons with defense ministries of other nations or organizations like the UN can provide insights into managing forced labor risks, potentially inspiring enhancements to the DoD's framework. Another critical area is extending the framework to cover supply chain tiers beyond first-tier subcontractors, which may require collaboration with host nations or multinational efforts, introducing complex jurisdictional challenges. Exploring the legal and diplomatic dimensions of enforcing anti-trafficking standards down the supply chain will be a challenging but impactful avenue for advancing global TIP prevention efforts (The White House, 2021).

In summary, future research should focus on broadening the scope of the ERM-integrated CTIP framework to encompass diverse contract types and geographic contexts, deepening its tools through advanced technologies and data analytics, and rigorously assessing its outcomes through quantitative metrics and comparative studies. These endeavors will test the framework's robustness, address its limitations, and contribute to an evolving strategy for combating TIP in public procurement, ultimately strengthening the DoD's anti-trafficking efforts and fostering ethical practices across its global operations.

H.   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study, while providing a foundational ERM-integrated framework for managing TIP risks in the DoD's overseas construction contracts, is subject to limitations imposed by its scope and data availability, which are critical to acknowledge for contextualizing its findings. First, the research's scope was deliberately delimited to the USCENTCOM area, specifically high-risk contexts like Kuwait and Afghanistan, and focused solely on construction services contracts due to their known vulnerabilities to trafficking violations, inherently limiting the generalizability of the findings and

framework to other geographic regions or contract types without adaptation. For instance, theaters of operation such as Europe or the Pacific, with distinct legal and regulatory environments, or industries like manufacturing or IT services, with unique trafficking risk profiles, may require tailored adjustments to the framework.

Additionally, the research was constrained by data availability, relying on publicly available documents (e.g., GAO reports, DoD policies, prior research) and a limited number of expert interviews, without access to internal DoD contract data or extensive firsthand accounts of trafficking incidents due to confidentiality and sensitivity issues, necessitating assessments by inference or proxy that may introduce bias or miss nuances capturable only through broader data or field studies (Tsai et al., 2016). Consequently, while the study offers a valuable model for USCENTCOM construction contracts, its recommendations are most directly applicable to similar high-risk scenarios, necessitating further research to broaden its applicability across diverse operational contexts.

Methodologically, the study's qualitative, exploratory approach introduces additional constraints, as the proposed framework has not been empirically validated through implementation but remains a conceptual design informed by expert opinion and analogous practices. The reliance on a limited sample of expert interviews, while providing depth, may not fully capture the perspectives of all DoD stakeholder communities, such as field-level contracting officers or contractors, whose insights could only be supplemented through broader empirical testing. Furthermore, the analysis concentrated on high-level frameworks, such as FAR and DFARS regulations, without delving into service-specific orders or granular contracting processes, potentially overlooking lower-level barriers or opportunities for enhancing CTIP practices. The absence of detailed regulatory analysis at the operational level limits the framework's immediate applicability to diverse DoD contexts, underscoring the need for more granular studies to address these gaps.

Finally, the study's focus on TIP risks within DoD contracting did not account for broader socio-economic factors contributing to labor trafficking, such as local labor laws, poverty, or migration patterns, which are beyond the DoD's direct control but

significantly influence the framework's effectiveness. Assessments, such as the effectiveness of current oversight, were thus inferred from audit reports rather than direct observation, introducing potential bias or missing nuances that only comprehensive field studies could reveal. The rapidly evolving policy landscape, with new reports and initiatives emerging during the thesis's development, further positions this research as a snapshot in time requiring ongoing updates. Recognizing these limitations is essential for readers to interpret the conclusions judiciously and for practitioners to adapt the recommendations with caution, viewing the framework as a foundational step that, while necessitating further refinement and validation through future research, offers a strategic direction grounded in observed gaps and best practices for stakeholders to build upon with additional data and context-specific insights.

I.   FINAL REFLECTIONS

This research bears profound implications for the ethical conduct of defense procurement, underscoring the urgent need for reform in how the DoD addresses TIP risks within its overseas construction contracts. The analysis and recommendations directly address oversight findings, such as those from the GAO (2024b), by translating the broad call for a "systematic approach" into a tailored ERM-integrated framework designed specifically for the DoD's operational context. In doing so, the thesis fills a critical gap in the department's anti-trafficking efforts, moving beyond ad hoc compliance to a structured risk management strategy. A key reflection is the pivotal role of leadership commitment and cultural transformation: Implementing systematic risk management for CTIP transcends the mere adoption of new processes, serving as a powerful statement of the DoD's values and priorities. This shift elevates forced labor from a compliance checklist to a strategic imperative requiring sustained attention, reinforcing that safeguarding human rights within the DoD's supply chain is not only a moral obligation but is also integral to mission success and operational integrity, protecting vulnerable workers while shielding the DoD from legal liabilities, mission disruptions, and reputational damage that undermine its moral authority.

The significance of a systematic risk management approach lies in its capacity to institutionalize diligence and accountability across the DoD's procurement practices. By

embedding TIP prevention into the core of risk management, the framework ensures that anti-trafficking efforts no longer depend on individual champions or the visibility of egregious incidents to catalyze action; rather, they become an intrinsic part of routine decision-making and oversight processes. This research demonstrates the feasibility and benefits of such integration: the proposed ERM framework for CTIP provides a proactive pathway to anticipate trafficking risks before they manifest, coordinate responses across diverse stakeholders, and foster continuous improvement through iterative risk assessment and mitigation. This transformative approach redefines the DoD's responsibility, shifting from reactive responses to trafficking incidents to a preventive paradigm that integrates TIP risk management into standard operating procedures, ensuring consistent and effective enforcement across the contract life cycle. For the OSD CTIP PMO and policymakers, this approach necessitates a strategic pivot beyond awareness training and policy directives toward constructing a resilient system that proactively identifies risks and enforces anti-trafficking standards with precision and consistency.

A broader reflection centers on the impact of this framework on the DoD's procurement ethics and strategic objectives, particularly in its global operational context. Operating in challenging environments worldwide, the DoD can strengthen its commitment to the rule of law and human dignity by enhancing controls against forced labor in its contracts, thereby bolstering the United States' credibility and standing on the international stage. Ethical procurement is not a peripheral issue but a cornerstone of operational readiness, ensuring contracts proceed without labor disputes or scandals that could disrupt missions, while also supporting national security objectives by denying revenue to traffickers and upholding American values of justice and integrity. Systematic risk management in CTIP thus constitutes a critical component of good governance, aligning ethical practices with strategic priorities. Through its recommendations, this thesis urges DoD leadership to view CTIP not merely as a legal obligation but as an opportunity to lead by example in eradicating modern slavery, fostering a legacy of ethical procurement that resonates globally. A zero-tolerance stance on TIP must be underpinned by zero-tolerance practices, best achieved through a deliberate, well-

structured risk management approach that ensures accountability and vigilance at every level of the DoD's operations.

J.   SUMMARY

This chapter has demonstrated how an ERM approach can fundamentally transform DoD's efforts to combat TIP risks in its overseas construction contracts. It commenced with a restatement of the study's purpose and methodology, highlighting its response to identified gaps in DoD's current CTIP practices, which were revealed to be fragmented and reactive. The insights and conclusions underscored that without a structured framework, anti-trafficking efforts remain piecemeal and inadequate to address the pervasive challenge of forced labor. The chapter then presented detailed recommendations for policy and practice, including piloting the ERM-integrated CTIP framework in CENTCOM construction contracts, updating FAR/DFARS regulations, launching a centralized CTIP risk dashboard, and embedding continuous improvement mechanisms. These recommendations could significantly enhance oversight and prevention of forced labor in defense contracting, ensuring systematic risk management across the contract life cycle. The chapter also explored implications for the OSD CTIP PMO, emphasizing its critical leadership role in driving and institutionalizing these changes, while acknowledging the study's scope and data limitations to contextualize the findings and temper expectations for immediate applicability.

The urgency of addressing forced labor risks systematically cannot be overstated—each unmanaged contract represents not only a potential violation of law and ethics but also a human tragedy, perpetuating exploitation in vulnerable supply chains. Therefore, the DoD must act with resolve and innovation, adopting the framework and recommendations to forge a future in which its contracting processes are fortified against exploitation and the values of human rights and dignity are upheld even in the most remote worksites. This research affirms that vigilance against human trafficking requires a systematic and proactive approach, and it provides a strategic roadmap to make this principle a reality in DoD procurement, ensuring ethical integrity and operational excellence in defense contracting.

Implementation Takeaways: To ensure traction for the proposed ERM-integrated CTIP framework, implementation must begin with early risk identification, standardized contractor vetting, enhanced COR training, centralized incident tracking, and alignment with DoD-wide ERM oversight mechanisms. As detailed in Appendix B, Table 13, these five priorities offer a systematic roadmap for improving compliance, transparency, and accountability in overseas construction contracts, translating the research findings into actionable steps that address the most critical gaps identified in current DoD practices.

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This appendix contains the complete semi-structured interview protocols used to gather insights from subject matter experts on current Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) practices and potential improvements through Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) integration. The questions were designed to systematically explore existing processes, identify gaps, and understand coordination challenges across the contract life cycle. Two distinct protocols were developed: one focused on understanding current DoD CTIP practices and another aimed at benchmarking best practices from the Department of State's systematic risk management approach.

A.   QUESTIONS TO OUSD COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (CTIP) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICE TIP EXPERTS

1.   Purpose

- Understand existing processes and tools
- Identify gaps in current practices
- Gather insights for process improvements
- Collect specific examples and documentation
- Understand coordination challenges

2.   Pre-Award Phase

- What risk assessment tools or checklists currently exist to help contracting officers evaluate human trafficking risks before solicitation?
- How does the CTIP PMO office assist contracting officers in developing appropriate trafficking prevention requirements for solicitations, particularly for high-risk areas?
- What guidance exists for evaluating contractors' trafficking compliance plans during source selection?
- Are there specific pre-award risk indicators for construction services contracts that contracting officers should look for?
- How are trafficking risks in specific geographical areas communicated to contracting officers during acquisition planning?

3.   Award Phase

- What tools or checklists exist to verify contractor compliance with trafficking requirements during contract award?

- How does the CTIP PMO ensure trafficking prevention clauses are properly incorporated into contracts?
- What guidance exists for evaluating subcontractor relationships in high-risk areas?
- Are there specific requirements or processes for documenting trafficking risk assessments in the contract file?
- How are trafficking compliance requirements communicated to contractors during post-award conferences?

4. Post-Award Phase

- What monitoring tools or checklists exist for CORs to detect potential trafficking violations?
- How does the CTIP PMO track and analyze reported trafficking violations or concerns?
- What processes exist for conducting trafficking compliance audits of construction contracts?
- How are trafficking-related performance issues documented and addressed?
- What guidance exists for investigating potential trafficking violations?

5. General Process Questions

- How does the CTIP PMO coordinate with other agencies on trafficking risk management?
- What training is provided to contracting officers and CORs specifically on managing trafficking risks?
- How are best practices and lessons learned captured and shared across the contracting workforce?
- What data is collected to measure the effectiveness of current trafficking prevention efforts?
- What do you see as the main gaps or challenges in the current processes for managing trafficking risks?

6. Follow-up Questions

- Can you share examples of existing checklists or tools?
- What improvements to current processes would you recommend?
- How could the risk management process be made more systematic?
- What additional resources would be helpful for contracting officers and CORs?
- How could coordination between stakeholders be improved?

B. QUESTIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (FOCUS ON BENCHMARKING) TIP EXPERTS

1. Purpose

- Understand State's systematic approach to risk management
- Identify transferable best practices
- Learn from their implementation experience
- Gather insights on practical application of the OMB framework
- Understand how they coordinate between stakeholders

2. Pre-Award Phase

- How does your office identify and assess trafficking risks during the acquisition planning phase?
- Could you describe how you've integrated the OMB ERM Framework Circular A-123 into your risk assessment processes?
- What specific risk indicators or criteria do you use to determine high-risk contracts?
- How do you communicate identified risks to contracting officers during the pre-solicitation phase?
- What tools or templates have you developed to help contracting officers evaluate trafficking risks?

3. Award Phase

- How do you verify contractor compliance with anti-trafficking requirements during source selection?
- What processes exist for reviewing contractor anti-trafficking compliance plans?
- Could you describe your checklist or evaluation criteria for reviewing compliance plans?
- How do you document trafficking risk assessments in the contract file?
- What guidance exists for evaluating subcontractor relationships in high-risk areas?

4. Post-Award Phase

- What monitoring framework have you implemented for high-risk contracts?
- How do you track and analyze reported trafficking violations or concerns?
- What metrics do you use to measure the effectiveness of your risk management approach?
- How often do you reassess trafficking risks during contract performance?
- What processes exist for escalating trafficking concerns?

5. Risk Management Framework Implementation

- How did you develop your risk management approach to align with OMB Circular A-123?
- What challenges did you face in implementing a systematic risk management approach?
- How do you coordinate between your office and contracting officials?
- What tools or resources have been most effective in managing trafficking risks?
- How do you ensure continuous improvement of your risk management processes?

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- What best practices have you identified in managing trafficking risks?
- How do you share lessons learned across the department?
- What recommendations would you give to other agencies implementing similar frameworks?
- How do you measure the success of your risk management approach?
- What improvements are you planning to make to your current processes?

APPENDIX B. REGULATORY AND POLICY REFERENCE MATRIX

This appendix provides five comprehensive reference tables that synthesize and organize key regulatory frameworks, policy evolution, and implementation tracking related to combating trafficking in persons within federal and defense contracting. These matrices support the analysis presented in Chapters II and IV while serving as practical implementation tools for contracting professionals and foundational resources for future research.

Table 8 maps current FAR and DFARS anti-trafficking provisions against the five ERM phases, identifying specific regulatory gaps and proposing systematic enhancements to strengthen risk management integration. Table 9 provides a detailed comparison of DoD and State Department CTIP practices, highlighting best practices and implementation advantages that inform the proposed framework. Table 10 chronicles the legislative and policy evolution from the TVPA of 2000 through current requirements, establishing the historical context for contemporary anti-trafficking efforts. Table 11 tracks major GAO recommendations and DoD implementation responses, demonstrating how this research addresses persistent oversight concerns. Table 12 identifies specific ERM integration opportunities across each contract life cycle phase, providing an implementation roadmap with priority rankings. Table 13 synthesizes the key findings into prioritized, actionable recommendations that translate research insights into practical implementation steps for DoD leadership and contracting professionals.

These reference matrices offer multiple benefits to diverse stakeholders by serving as practical quick-reference guides for contracting officers implementing anti-trafficking requirements, providing research foundations for scholars examining policy effectiveness and regulatory evolution, establishing implementation roadmaps that highlight priority areas for systematic improvements, and offering historical context that illuminates the development of current anti-trafficking frameworks. Collectively, these tables transform the complex regulatory landscape into accessible, actionable information that bridges the gap between policy intentions and operational implementation.

A. REGULATORY GAP ANALYSIS: ERM INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES

Table 8.   FAR/DFARS Anti-Trafficking Provisions Mapped to ERM Phases. Sources: FAR 52.222-50 (2025); DFARS PGI 222.17 (2025); OMB Circular A-123 (2016).

ERM Phase	Regulation/Clause	Current Requirement	ERM Alignment Gap	Proposed Enhancement
Risk Identification	FAR 52.222-50	Mandatory clause inclusion	No systematic risk profiling	Add contract risk screening matrix
	FAR 52.222-56	Compliance plan certification	No risk-differentiated evaluation criteria used	Implement risk-based evaluation criteria
	DFARS 252.222-7006	Arbitration restrictions	Limited to specific violations	Expand to cover broader risk indicators
Risk Assessment	FAR 22.1703	$550,000 threshold for compliance plans	One-size-fits-all approach	Implement risk-tiered requirements
	DFARS PGI 222.1703	COR monitoring guidance	Minimal assessment criteria	Develop systematic risk scoring
Risk Response	FAR 22.1704	Contract remedies (termination, withholding)	Strong enforcement tools available	Enhance graduated response protocols
	DFARS 252.225-7040	Contractor personnel oversight	Basic requirements	Strengthen monitoring provisions

ERM Phase	Regulation/Clause	Current Requirement	ERM Alignment Gap	Proposed Enhancement
Risk Monitoring	DFARS PGI 222.17	QASP development guidance	Inconsistent implementation	Mandate CTIP-specific monitoring plans
	FAR 52.222-50(h)	Annual certification requirement	Limited verification	Require government review/ approval
Risk Communication	FAR 52.222-50(f)	Reporting requirements	Multiple channels, inconsistent use	Standardize reporting protocols
	DFARS PGI 222.1703	Training requirements	General guidance only	Mandate role-specific training

Gap analysis based on regulatory review conducted in 2024–2025. Proposed enhancements align with *OMB Circular A-123* ERM principles and GAO recommendations for systematic risk management.

B. COMPARATIVE AGENCY PRACTICES: DoD AND STATE DEPARTMENT CTIP APPROACHES

Table 9.   DoD vs. State Department CTIP Practices Comparison. Sources: GAO-24-106973 (2024); GAO-21-546 (2021); DOS TIP Report (2024).

Function	DoD Current Practice	State Department Practice	Advantage/Gap
Risk Identification	Clause insertion, limited screening	Portfolio analysis using TIP Report data	State: Systematic risk profiling
Pre-Award Assessment	Basic contractor responsibility checks	Risk-based contract categorization	State: Over 50 risk categories identified
Compliance Monitoring	COR oversight (inconsistent)	Structured monitoring framework	State: Systematic approach

Function	DoD Current Practice	State Department Practice	Advantage/Gap
Data Management	Fragmented systems (FAPIIS, CPARS)	Integrated risk dashboard concept	State: Better integration
Training	General CTIP awareness	Risk-focused acquisition training	State: Targeted approach
Enforcement	Contract remedies available	Coordinated enforcement strategy	DoD: Strong legal tools, State: Better coordination
Reporting	Multiple channels, gaps in documentation	Standardized reporting requirements	State: More consistent documentation

Comparison based on *GAO-24-106973* findings and agency documentation available through 2024. State Department practices represent best practices identified for potential DoD adoption.

C. POLICY EVOLUTION FRAMEWORK: LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Table 10.   Legislative and Policy Evolution Timeline. Sources: TVPA (2000); NSPD-22 (2002); EO 13627 (2012); NDAA FY2013; DoD Instruction 2200.01 (2019).

Year	Legislation/Policy	Key CTIP Provisions	Impact on DoD Contracting
2000	Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)	Established 3P framework, criminalized trafficking	Foundation for federal anti-trafficking policy
2002	NSPD-22	USG zero-tolerance policy	Mandated agency compliance programs
2007	DoD Instruction 2200.01 (original)	Established DoD CTIP program	Created CTIP PMO, training requirements
2012	Executive Order 13627	Strengthened contractor requirements	Enhanced compliance plans, reporting

Year	Legislation/Policy	Key CTIP Provisions	Impact on DoD Contracting
2013	NDAA FY2013, Title XVII	Mandatory anti-trafficking clauses	Updated FAR/DFARS, expanded prohibitions
2015	FAR Case 2008–024 Final Rule	Implemented EO 13627 requirements	Current compliance plan structure
2019	DoD Instruction 2200.01 (revised)	Updated roles, responsibilities, training	Current CTIP PMO framework
2022	TVPPRA Reauthorization	Enhanced enforcement, victim protection	Continued zero-tolerance emphasis

Timeline includes major federal legislation and DoD-specific policies affecting anti-trafficking requirements in defense contracting. Implementation dates reflect when provisions became effective for contracting activities.

D. OVERSIGHT IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING: GAO RECOMMENDATIONS AND AGENCY RESPONSE

Table 11. GAO Recommendations and Implementation Status. Sources: GAO-15-102 (2014); GAO-21-546 (2021); GAO-24-106973 (2024).

Report	Year	Key Recommendations	DoD Response	Implementation Status
GAO-15-102	2014	Strengthen oversight, improve monitoring	Accepted recommendations	Partially implemented
GAO-21-546	2021	Clarify reporting roles, reinstate training metrics	Accepted recommendations	In progress
		Address contractor accountability gaps	Accepted with modifications	Limited progress
		Improve database documentation	Accepted	Ongoing implementation
GAO-24-106973	2024	Adopt systematic risk management approach	Not yet formally responded	Primary focus of this thesis

Report	Year	Key Recommendations	DoD Response	Implementation Status
		Implement structured risk identification	Not yet formally responded	Addressed by proposed framework
		Enhance interagency coordination	Not yet formally responded	Included in recommendations

Implementation status current as of 2024. "In progress" indicates ongoing DoD efforts; recommendations from *GAO-24-106973* represent the primary focus of this research's proposed solutions.

E. IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP: CONTRACT LIFE CYCLE ENHANCEMENT PRIORITIES

Table 12.   ERM Integration Opportunities by Contract Phase. Sources: Analysis based on Chapters II and IV findings; OMB Circular A-123 (2016); GAO-24-106973 (2024).

Contract Phase	Current CTIP Practice	ERM Enhancement Opportunity	Implementation Priority
Pre-Award Planning	Standard clause inclusion	Risk-based contract profiling	High
Market Research	Limited TIP risk consideration	Geographic/sector risk analysis	High
Solicitation Development	One-size-fits-all clauses	Risk-tiered requirements	Medium
Source Selection	Basic responsibility determination	CTIP performance evaluation	Medium
Contract Award	Compliance plan submission	Government review/ approval process	High
Post-Award Orientation	Optional CTIP briefing	Mandatory risk communication	Medium
Performance Monitoring	Ad hoc COR oversight	Systematic monitoring protocols	High

Contract Phase	Current CTIP Practice	ERM Enhancement Opportunity	Implementation Priority
Compliance Review	Annual contractor certification	Government verification process	High
Incident Response	Reactive investigation	Proactive risk reassessment	Medium
Contract Closeout	No formal CTIP performance debrief or lessons learned collected	Performance documentation for future risk assessment	Low

Implementation priorities based on gap analysis findings from Chapter IV and resource allocation considerations. High-priority items address critical gaps in systematic risk management identified through research.

F.   IMPLEMENTATION SYNTHESIS: KEY TAKEAWAYS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

Table 13.   Key Takeaways for Implementation. Sources: Analysis based on Chapters III and IV findings; OMB Circular A-123 (2016); GAO-24-106973 (2024).

Implementation Priority	Actionable Recommendation
Early Risk Identification	Integrate geographic and contract-type risk screening during pre-award planning
Standardized Monitoring & Vetting	Develop consistent contractor vetting tools and QASP enforcement mechanisms
Role-Specific Oversight Training	Expand COR and KO CTIP responsibilities with targeted training and compliance checklists
Centralized Risk Tracking	Establish a CTIP risk dashboard to track incidents and contractor performance
Integration with ERM Governance	Align CTIP risk reporting with broader DoD ERM oversight and strategic resource allocation

Priorities based on ERM-phase mapping and compliance deficiencies documented in Chapters III and IV.

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