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Trends in Marine Corps Procurement: Analyzing Sourcing Patterns Between the Defense Logistics Agency and Regional Contracting Offices at the Marine Expeditionary Force Level

December 2025

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Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Marine Corps procurement behavior at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level, focusing on how I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF allocate obligations and contracting actions between enterprise-managed acquisitions through the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and decentralized purchases executed by Regional Contracting Offices (RCOs). Using contract-level data from the Defense Agencies Initiative (DAI) and the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) for FY24–FY25, the analysis evaluates more than $199 million and 2,000 procurement actions across 27 spending categories. Key measures include dollars obligated, number of transactions, and the proportion of spend awarded through each channel by fiscal year, MEF, and category.

Results show distinct sourcing patterns tied to mission demands and geography. DLA predominantly supports high-volume, standardized commodity purchases, while RCOs manage mission-specific and location-dependent requirements. Although expected based on policy roles, this research quantifies the scale and variation of sourcing behavior across MEFs, demonstrating how operational context drives procurement execution.

Findings highlight the value of a balanced dual-channel approach to preserve scale efficiency and operational agility. Recommendations include incorporating procurement trend reviews into MEF planning, strengthening expeditionary RCO capacity, and improving enterprise data visibility to guide sourcing decisions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BLS	Basic Life Support
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear
DAI	Defense Agencies Initiative
DFARS	Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FPDS-NG	Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation
HAZMAT	Hazardous Material
HQMC	Headquarters Marine Corps
IT	Information Technology
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
MARDIV	Marine Division
MAW	Marine Aircraft Wing
MCBUL	Marine Corps Bulletin
MCO	Marine Corps Order
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MIG	MEF Information Group
MAG	Marine Aircraft Group
MAGTF	Marine Air Ground Task Force
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
RCO	Regional Contracting Office
USMC	United States Marine Corps

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines Marine Corps procurement behavior at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level, focusing on how I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF allocate procurement between enterprise-managed acquisitions through the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and decentralized procurement executed by Regional Contracting Offices (RCOs). The research addresses a gap in the literature by analyzing recent fiscal year (FY) data (FY24–FY25) across 27 procurement categories, offering insights into how sourcing decisions affect efficiency, standardization, and operational support. As the Marine Corps modernizes for distributed operations and Indo-Pacific competition, understanding whether procurement channels support readiness, agility, and cost-effectiveness is critical for commanders, policy makers, and acquisition leaders.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to evaluate procurement channel utilization within the Marine Corps and provide evidence-based recommendations for optimizing sourcing strategies. While DLA offers enterprise-level economies of scale and standardized processes, RCOs provide tailored, mission-specific contracting support. Understanding how MEFs balance these pathways is critical for improving acquisition policy and ensuring effective support for expeditionary operations.

B. METHODOLOGY

The study employs a quantitative research design. Contract-level data was collected from two primary sources: the Defense Agencies Initiative (DAI) Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard and the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation (FPDS-NG). DLA contract data was drawn from Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC)-generated DAI reports, while RCO-specific data was provided by HQMC with full capture in FPDS-NG. Key variables included procurement channel, fiscal year, obligation value, procurement category, command, and vendor.

The analysis was conducted in three phases:

1. Data preparation – compiling and cleaning records to ensure accuracy.
2. Descriptive and comparative analysis – examining obligations by channel, MEF, and category to identify sourcing trends.
3. Contextual interpretation – evaluating findings within the operational missions and tempo of each MEF.

C. RESULTS

The analysis revealed distinct differences in procurement behavior across the three MEFs.

- I MEF demonstrated a balanced sourcing approach, drawing relatively evenly on both DLA and RCOs. This hybrid pattern reflects its ability to leverage enterprise-level contracts for standardized commodities while also taking advantage of local contracting capacity through its regional office.
- II MEF relied more heavily on DLA, reflecting its reliance on enterprise-level solutions for standardized, high-volume commodities rather than localized contracting.
- III MEF leaned more on RCOs, emphasizing its need for flexible, locally tailored contracting. Its forward-deployed posture in the Indo-Pacific requires responsive solutions to sustain frequent exercises, partner engagements, and contingency operations.

Findings indicate that Marine Corps procurement depends on both DLA and RCOs in complementary ways, with each channel offering advantages tied to requirement type, scale, and mission context. DLA provides standardized, enterprise-level commodities at volume, while RCOs enable tailored, locally responsive contracting for mission-specific needs. The analysis also shows that MEFs employ these channels differently, shaped by their operational tempo, geographic posture, and mission demands. This variation emphasizes the need for procurement policies that account for regional and operational differences rather than applying one-size-fits-all guidance. The central challenge lies in

maintaining balance: over-reliance on DLA risks diminishing internal contracting expertise, while excessive dependence on RCOs could strain resources and slow high-volume acquisitions. A carefully managed dual-channel system is therefore essential to preserve efficiency, adaptability, and long-term operational effectiveness across the force.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Incorporate Procurement Channel Analysis into MEF-Level Planning

Establish an annual review of procurement data by MEF G-4 and Comptroller staff to evaluate channel utilization, cost-effectiveness, and mission alignment. Integrating this analysis into operational planning will allow MEFs to adjust sourcing strategies before the next fiscal cycle.

2. Evaluate RCO Capacity in Each MEF

Conduct formal assessments of RCO staffing, training, and contracting resources, particularly in forward-deployed environments such as III MEF, to ensure capabilities match operational demands.

3. Mitigate Institutional Inertia Through Training and Incentives

Enhance acquisition training for supply officers and contracting personnel through PME and course curricula, while introducing incentives for meeting efficiency benchmarks such as cost savings or reduced lead times.

4. Improve Data Visibility and Cross-MEF Learning

Develop a standardized reporting dashboard accessible across MEFs and HQMC to track category-level spend, channel utilization, and performance outcomes. Sharing best practices will strengthen institutional learning and reduce redundancy.

5. Pilot RCO Entry into DLA-Dominated Categories

Test RCO-led procurement in select categories traditionally managed by DLA to evaluate potential gains in cost, speed, or mission alignment. Results from these pilots should inform long-term sourcing policy.

E. CONCLUSION

This study provides the first MEF-level analysis of Marine Corps procurement behaviors, comparing decentralized RCOs and enterprise-level sourcing through DLA. The results show that while both channels are essential, MEFs employ them differently based on operational tempo, geographic posture, and mission demands. These differences show that procurement is not uniform across the force; instead, it reflects the unique requirements of each MEF's operating environment.

The findings demonstrate that DLA is most effective for high-volume, standardized commodities, while RCOs deliver flexible, mission-specific solutions. However, the balance between these channels must be carefully managed: over-reliance on DLA risks eroding internal contracting expertise, while overburdening RCOs could slow large-scale procurement. The recommended actions, ranging from improving data visibility to evaluating RCO capacity and piloting new sourcing approaches, aim to strengthen the dual-channel system, preserve institutional flexibility, and ensure procurement strategies remain aligned with the operational needs of Marine Corps expeditionary forces.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The multi-channel approach of utilizing both the Marine Corps Regional Contracting Office (RCO) and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) provides flexibility but also creates challenges. Over-reliance on DLA risks eroding the United States Marine Corps' (USMC) internal contracting proficiency and reducing visibility into pricing and performance. Conversely, underutilizing DLA's efficiencies could slow timelines and overburden limited RCO resources. Understanding how the Marine Expeditionary Forces (I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF) balance these channels across procurement categories is essential for identifying trends, managing risk, and optimizing support to operational forces.

Despite these issues, formal research evaluating USMC procurement behavior at the MEF level remains scarce. Detailed analysis of the trade-offs between RCO-managed contracts and DLA-sourced procurement is largely absent. Most existing studies focus on broad contracting reform (Perrine & Murphy, 2020) or acquisition trends (Moore et al., 2011) but fail to provide specific insights into the USMC's cost implications and operational risks. This lack of service-specific research hinders the Marine Corps leadership's ability to make fully informed decisions regarding using external agencies like DLA versus their internal contracting capacity. Consequently, this knowledge gap obstructs efforts to optimize procurement strategies that support financial stewardship, operational readiness, and mission assurance.

This study aims to enhance Marine Corps acquisition knowledge by providing a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of how the MEFs utilize RCOs and DLA across procurement categories in fiscal year (FY) 2024 and 2025. By identifying trends in sourcing decisions and analyzing the implications of channel selection, this research supports more strategic, evidence-based acquisition planning. The findings will help Marine Corps leaders optimize procurement strategies to enhance operational effectiveness while maintaining long-term institutional contracting capability.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study uses data-driven analysis to examine how I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF utilize DLA and RCOs across procurement categories during FY24-FY25. By analyzing sourcing patterns at the MEF level, the research addresses a critical knowledge gap: the USMC currently lacks a standardized approach to procurement, resulting in inconsistent use of DLA and RCO channels. Without a clear understanding of these patterns, the USMC risks the following:

- Procurement inefficiencies stemming from inconsistent sourcing practices, duplicative efforts, and acquisition delays.
- Uneven operational support across MEFs, where responsiveness and contracting solutions vary by channel selection.
- Missed opportunities for internal capability development, since over-reliance on DLA can limit RCO experience, capacity-building, and preparedness for future high-demand contracting environments.

This study enhances institutional knowledge within the Department of the Navy by supplying data-driven evidence on procurement behaviors. The results will support the optimization of acquisition policies to improve:

- Efficiency – maximizing speed and cost-effectiveness in meeting operational requirements.
- Standardization – determining where unified sourcing strategies can reduce variability without undermining MEF-level autonomy.
- Operational readiness – ensuring procurement practices align with mission demands and enhance force-wide responsiveness.

Ultimately, the study empowers leadership to balance enterprise contracting priorities managed through DLA with regional mission-driven procurement conducted by RCOs. This enables more informed strategic decisions and strengthen the Marine Corps' overall acquisition posture.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary question for this study is how do I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF differ in their use of DLA and the RCO across procurement categories, and what do these patterns reveal about the effectiveness, consistency, and alignment of Marine Corps procurement practices? It seeks to identify how much each MEF relies on DLA versus the RCOs across multiple procurement categories.

The findings reveal whether MEFs are selecting sourcing channels that best support mission requirements and whether those choices enhance or undermine readiness, cost efficiency, and internal contracting capability development. If procurement behaviors align with mission priorities, they will suggest an effective balance between DLA and RCOs. Conversely, patterns of overreliance or significant inconsistencies between MEFs may expose systemic gaps in acquisition policy, training, or strategic guidance.

The primary questions have the following subcomponents to be answered:

- Which procurement categories show the most significant variance in sourcing between DLA and RCO across the MEFs? This examines where MEFs diverge most in channel selection and why specific categories are dominated by either DLA or the RCO.
- Are there identifiable trends or preferences within each MEF when sourcing specific goods or services through DLA or the RCO? This investigates whether MEF-specific operational demands, institutional norms, or regional constraints drive sourcing behaviors.
- To what extent do procurement channel choices align with each MEF's mission, operational tempo, or geographic constraints? This evaluates whether sourcing decisions support operational objectives or reflect ad hoc preferences that may hinder consistency.
- What insights from observed procurement patterns can inform future Marine Corps acquisition policy or guidance? This synthesizes findings to identify opportunities for improving standardization, strengthening

internal contracting capabilities, and enhancing support to operational forces.

D. SCOPE

This thesis analyzes how I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF utilize DLA and RCOs across procurement categories during FY24-FY25. It focuses on identifying patterns, variances, and trends in sourcing behavior to evaluate how procurement channel choices affect efficiency, standardization, and operational support. Key focus areas include:

- Procurement Channel Utilization. Assessing the extent to which each MEF relies on DLA versus RCOs across multiple procurement categories.
- Geographic and Mission Influences. Examine how each MEF's location, mission, and operational demands shape procurement behavior, particularly where regional contracting flexibility or centralized enterprise sourcing provides an advantage.
- Consistency and Standardization. Analyze procurement patterns to determine whether Marine Corps sourcing demonstrates alignment across MEFs or reflects ad hoc, region-specific approaches that may hinder enterprise efficiency.
- Implications for Acquisition Policy. Identifying insights from observed behaviors to inform acquisition strategies, balancing enterprise contracting efficiencies with regional contracting capabilities to optimize support to operational forces.

II. BACKGROUND

A. MARINE CORPS PROCUREMENT

The Marine Corps relies on contracting to sustain both garrison and operational requirements, ensuring that units acquire the necessary goods and services for readiness and mission execution (Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2016). Like other military services, the USMC executes procurement through a mix of internal and external contracting sources (Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2016). These sources form a dual-channel procurement system that blends decentralized flexibility with centralized efficiency. Each channel brings unique advantages, but over-reliance on one risk reducing the Marine Corps' overall contracting capability. Understanding how these sources operate, where they fit in the organizational framework, and what authorities they hold is critical for analyzing the broader acquisition environment.

1. Regional Contracting Offices

The primary internal contracting pathway for operational units is the RCO. They are located at major Marine Corps installations and operate under the control of the Marine Corps Installations Command (Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2013). These offices are staffed by uniformed contracting officers and civilian contract specialists. They are responsible for planning, soliciting, awarding, and administering contracts for a variety of goods and services, including logistics services, construction, training, and facility support. Because of their close coordination with operational units, RCOs are often best positioned to handle complex, mission-specific requirements. The RCOs follow the guidelines set by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS), along with other Marine Corps policies such as the Marine Corps Acquisition Policies and Procedures manual.

2. Defense Logistics Agency

Along with the RCO, the Marine Corps utilizes assisted acquisition services that involve contracting support from external federal agencies such as DLA. Authorized under

FAR Subpart 17.5 as interagency acquisitions, this approach essentially transfers the acquisition and contracting responsibilities from the Marine Corps to these external agencies (FAR 17.5, 2025). DLA is a part of the Department of Defense and focuses on logistics, sustainment, and military-specific items. The Marine Corps uses them to procure items such as uniforms, rations, bulk fuel, and medical supplies (Defense Logistics Agency, n.d.). DLA's enterprise-level scale allows the Marine Corps to access high-volume, cataloged items quickly and often at reduced administrative burden.

3. Procurement Managers

Marine Corps supply officers often serve as procurement managers for their units, bridging the gap between operational requirements and the contracting community. Their role involves defining requirements, ensuring proper documentation, and selecting the most appropriate procurement pathway (Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2019). In practice, this means coordinating with RCOs for complex, mission-specific contracts or leveraging DLA for standardized, enterprise-level acquisitions. By shaping how requirements are routed, supply officers directly influence the balance between decentralized flexibility and centralized efficiency. Their decisions not only affect cost and speed but also determine how effectively procurement aligns with mission readiness.

B. MARINE CORPS STRUCTURE

The USMC structures its combat power around three active groups called Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs). Each MEF integrates ground, aviation, and logistics units under a single headquarters, providing a self-sufficient force capable of sustained operations. The MEFs serve as the Marine Corps' highest-level warfighting organizations and are geographically aligned to support combatant commanders worldwide. Together, the three MEFs provide the USMC with global reach and flexibility. Their geographic dispersion and distinct operational tempos create different procurement patterns, making them an ideal basis for analyzing how sourcing decisions between RCOs and DLA vary across mission requirements.

1. I MEF

I MEF, headquartered at Camp Pendleton, California, supports U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Its location on the West Coast allows it to project power rapidly into the Pacific, where it plays a central role in deterrence, crisis response, and regional engagement (I Marine Expeditionary Force, n.d.). I MEF's operations balances large-scale training exercises in the Pacific with rotational deployments (I Marine Expeditionary Force, 2024). They are the largest MEF and have the capability to support operations in the Indo-Pacific while also responding to other crisis response missions (United States Marine Corps, 2022).

2. II MEF

II MEF, headquartered at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, supports U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command (II Marine Expeditionary Force, n.d.). From its East Coast position, II MEF provides rapid deployment capability into Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, making it essential for transatlantic security (II Marine Expeditionary Force, 2025). II MEF also has an established global response capability and can conduct operations throughout the world (United States Marine Corps, 2022).

3. III MEF

III MEF, headquartered in Okinawa, Japan, is the Marine Corps' only forward-deployed MEF (III Marine Expeditionary Force, n.d.). Its presence in the Indo-Pacific ensures immediate crisis response, persistent engagement with regional partners, and rapid access to contested areas (III Marine Expeditionary Force, n.d.). III MEF's operations are maritime focused with ongoing exercises, partner-nation engagements, and contingency response requirements. They are the first force to support sea denial and enable naval force access to counter Chinese aggression (United States Marine Corps, 2022).

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III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines how I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF utilize the DLA and RCOs across procurement categories. It reviews the regulatory frameworks governing USMC acquisitions, the roles of DLA and RCOs, and the operational and geographic factors influencing channel selection. The purpose is to establish a theoretical foundation, identify key findings, and highlight gaps that inform a data-driven analysis of MEF-level procurement behavior and its implications for efficiency, standardization, and operational support.

A. REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR MARINE CORPS PROCUREMENT

The USMC operates within a layered procurement system that combines enterprise-level and decentralized contracting structures to support operational and garrison needs. At the Department of Defense (DoD) level, procurement activities are governed by the FAR and DFARS, which together establish the overarching legal and procedural framework. These rules are further refined through the Navy Marine Corps Acquisition Regulation Supplement and the Marine Corps Acquisition Policies and Procedures manual, which tailor acquisition policies to meet the specific needs of USMC operations.

B. TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR 3006 CONTRACTING OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Statutory requirements, structured training programs, and defined career pathways shape the training and career development of USMC contracting officers and civilian personnel. This section reviews the foundational documents that guide this training, as well as recent academic research on career pathways and professional development.

The United States Congress established statutory framework for qualification requirements among federal contracting personnel (Contracting Positions: Qualification Requirements, 2025). It mandates specific requirements that must be met for supply personnel to obtain certain responsibilities, like awarding contracts above the simplified acquisition threshold, such as:

- Obtaining a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
- Completion of required contracting courses
- At least two years contracting experience to be able to award contracts above the simplified acquisition threshold.

These mandates ensure a consistent baseline of knowledge across the contracting workforce, helping to ensure the effective management of complex acquisitions without external support.

The Marine Corps Supply Chain Management Training and Readiness Manual (NAVMC 3500.64D) establishes training standards for USMC contracting officers, outlining individual training events needed to maintain readiness and guidance for unit-level training to prepare organizations for complex contracting requirements (Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2022). This is directly relevant to this study because the capability of the RCOs to manage decentralized procurement actions depends heavily on the proficiency and readiness of contracting personnel. Well-trained contracting officers are better equipped to handle diverse and complex acquisitions at the MEF level, which can influence whether requirements are sourced internally through RCOs or routed to enterprise-level agencies such as DLA.

In her thesis *Marine Corps Contracting Officer Career Pathway: Restructure MOS Designation System to Support and Improve the Service's Acquisition Workforce,* Pamela Unger identified significant challenges in the career progression of Marine Corps contracting officers. She argued that the current military occupational speciality (MOS) structure treats contracting as a secondary MOS which inhibits retention and professional growth (Unger, 2022). This limits the ability of contracting officers to gain the experience necessary for senior contracting roles and reduces the overall internal capability for the Marine Corps to manage its contracting requirements (Unger, 2022). This study ties in with this research as it argues that well-trained and experienced contracting officers are essential for the high performance of RCOs. If RCO capacity and expertise diminish, Marine Expeditionary Forces may increasingly turn to DLA for sourcing certain categories of goods and services, potentially impacting efficiency, standardization, and operational

support. Unger's findings provide critical context for interpreting procurement trends and understanding how workforce structure can influence MEF-level sourcing decisions.

A study by Adam Harrison, Craig Warner, and Dylan Armknecht titled *USMC Contingency Contracting Force: An Analysis of Transient Officers in a Rapidly Changing Acquisition Environment* examines the challenges facing the Marine Corps contracting force, highlighting the issues related to retaining experienced contracting officers. The study found that frequent officer turnover reduced the overall contracting capability of the force (Harrison et al., 2016). This finding is significant for this research because reduced RCO capacity can directly influence procurement behavior at the MEF level. When internal contracting expertise is lacking, units in the three MEFs may increasingly rely on enterprise-wide agencies such as DLA in cases where RCOs could otherwise fulfill the requirement. As a result, workforce instability within the contracting community can shape broader sourcing patterns and affect the balance between centralized and decentralized procurement across the Marine Corps.

A magazine article by Dr. Joni Dowling in collaboration with Susan Pollack titled "Contracting: Where We Are, How We Got Here, and a Look to our Future" discusses the recent shift from a broad-spectrum training model to a streamlined, competency-based approach designed to enhance the readiness and flexibility of the defense contracting workforce. The "Back-to-Basics" framework emphasizes ongoing professional development through credentials and local training for specific functional areas (Dowling & Pollack, 2022). It argues that well-trained contracting officers are "force multipliers" in executing the mission, aligning with the Marine Corps' need for a highly adaptable and capable contracting workforce to support evolving operational requirements (Dowling & Pollack, 2022). Dowling and Pollack's findings highlight the importance of maintaining robust internal contracting capabilities to avoid overreliance on enterprise-level solutions and preserve operational flexibility.

These documents and studies collectively highlight the critical importance of training, professional development, and workforce stability for the Marine Corps' contracting personnel. Well-qualified and continuously trained contracting officers form the foundation of an effective internal procurement capability through the RCOs. When

these personnel are adequately developed and retained, they are better equipped to handle diverse and complex requirements, enabling the Marine Corps to leverage internal contracting solutions effectively. Conversely, gaps in training, limited professional growth opportunities, and high turnover reduce RCO capacity, which can influence sourcing behaviors across the MEFs. As RCO capability declines, MEFs may increasingly rely on enterprise-level procurement channels like DLA, potentially creating imbalances between centralized efficiencies and decentralized operational support. Understanding these workforce-driven dynamics is essential for interpreting MEF-level procurement patterns and informing strategies to optimize the balance between DLA and RCO utilization.

C. SUPPLY OFFICER ROLE IN PROCUREMENT

Marine Corps officers play a critical role in shaping procurement behavior across MEFs, especially in determining whether to source through RCOs or DLA. *Management of Property in Possession of the Marine Corps* (MCO 4400.201) establishes policies and responsibilities for managing property records, requisitions, and financial accountability, all of which influence procurement channel selection (Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2018). Accurate property accountability and effective demand forecasting can enable supply officers to leverage RCOs for unit-specific needs or identify when standardized solutions through DLA are more appropriate. Understanding how supply officers execute these responsibilities provides essential context for interpreting MEF-level procurement patterns and assessing whether sourcing decisions reflect operational requirements, efficiency goals, and priorities for standardization across the Marine Corps.

D. ASSISTED ACQUISITIONS

Assisted acquisitions enable agencies to leverage contracting expertise from other government organizations, such as DLA. These acquisitions are governed by several key statutes and regulatory frameworks, such as *The Economy Act* (FAR 17.502-2, 2025), *Interagency Acquisitions* (FAR 17.5, 2025), and *Intragovernmental Support for Goods and Services* (Marine Corps Bulletin (MCBUL) 4491).

The Economy Act establishes the foundational authority to allow federal agencies to procure goods and services from each other when it is in the best interest of the government. It sets four conditions for use: funds must be available, order must be in the best interest of the government, the servicing agency must be capable of fulfilling the order, and the goods or services cannot be provided more conveniently or cheaply by a private source (FAR 17.502-2, 2025). This framework reduces the risk of unnecessary spending and ensures that assisted acquisitions are used only when they are most efficient and cost-effective.

Interagency Acquisitions provides the regulatory framework for interagency acquisitions, to include assisted acquisitions (FAR 17.5, 2025). It defines assisted acquisitions as a service agency providing significant contracting support, including contract management and oversight, for a requesting agency (FAR, 2025). It also establishes the policies and procedures designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and cost-effectiveness when using assisted acquisitions. Understanding the regulatory foundation behind assisted acquisitions is critical for this thesis. These rules shape when and why Marine Corps units opt for DLA-managed procurement over internally managed contracting. It also helps explain why certain sourcing patterns occur and is key to understanding how choosing between DLA and RCOs affects efficiency, standardization, and operational support at the MEF level.

Intragovernmental Support for Goods and Services (MCBUL 4491) provides specific guidance for Marine Corps personnel involved in intragovernmental transactions. It outlines the internal policies and procedures for executing these transactions and emphasizes the need for accurate documentation, proper financial controls, and compliance with policies and regulations to ensure these transactions are properly executed (Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2024). This document shows that the Marine Corps recognizes the value of assisted acquisitions and wants to ensure there are service specific policies in place to maximize its effectiveness.

Together, these statutes and policies shape how and when the Marine Corps chooses to source requirements through DLA rather than relying on the RCOs. *The Economy Act* authorizes the use of assisted acquisitions, FAR 17.5 defines the policies and procedures

for executing them, and MCBUL 4491 provides Marine Corps-specific guidance to ensure compliance and maximize effectiveness. Within this research, understanding the regulatory framework behind assisted acquisitions provides critical context for interpreting MEF-level procurement patterns and evaluating why certain categories of goods and services are more frequently routed through DLA. This perspective supports the broader objective of analyzing how sourcing decisions across I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF reflect trends in efficiency, standardization, and operational support.

E. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES IN ASSISTED ACQUISITIONS

Assisted acquisitions, including those through DLA, carry financial and operational risks that affect mission effectiveness, cost efficiency, and contract oversight. Several GAO reports provide valuable insights into these challenges, offering context for this research topic.

GAO-13-133R "Interagency Contracting: Agency Actions Address Key Management Challenges, but Additional Steps Needed to Ensure Consistent Implementation of Policy Changes," highlights the challenges in effectively managing interagency contracts. Inconsistent policy implementation, unclear roles and responsibilities, and poor cost tracking remain significant barriers to effective contract management (United States Government Accountability Office, 2013). The report calls for standardized data collection and robust internal controls to reduce costs and improve contract oversight. If policies governing these acquisitions are inconsistently applied or cost tracking is inadequate, MEFs risk reduced visibility into procurement expenses and performance outcomes when sourcing through DLA instead of the RCOs. This lack of transparency could influence MEF-level sourcing patterns by encouraging reliance on internal contracting when cost accountability is prioritized or, conversely, driving greater use of DLA when standardized enterprise processes seem more efficient.

GAO-11-784 "Interagency Contracting: Improvements Needed in Setting Fee Rates for Selected Programs," focuses on the cost structures associated with interagency contacts. The report highlights significant challenges in cost tracking, financial oversight,

and fee transparency, noting that some agencies lack the data needed to set and adjust fee rates (United States Government Accountability Office, 2011). For the Marine Corps, if DLA-managed acquisitions introduce significant cost premiums due to service fees, this could impact MEF-level preferences and make internally managed RCO contracts more financially advantageous in certain categories. Conversely, in categories where DLA's enterprise-scale efficiencies offset these fees, MEFs may lean more heavily on DLA to reduce administrative burdens and speed fulfillment. Understanding how these fee dynamics influence procurement behavior helps explain observed sourcing patterns and supports the broader evaluation of trade-offs between centralized efficiency and decentralized flexibility.

GAO-08-578 "Interagency Contracting: Need for Improved Information and Policy Implementation at the Department of State" further emphasizes the challenges associated with interagency contracting. Poor data management, inconsistent policy implementation, and gaps in training contribute to financial losses and inefficiencies (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008). Since DLA-managed assisted acquisitions represent a significant portion of enterprise-level sourcing in the Marine Corps, any inefficiencies or lack of transparency in interagency contracting can directly affect cost control, visibility, and responsiveness. If similar data management or oversight issues exist within DLA-supported transactions, MEFs may face challenges in maintaining accurate cost forecasting and operational planning. These risks emphasize the importance of understanding when and why MEFs rely on DLA versus RCOs and how procurement channel selection impacts efficiency, standardization, and mission readiness across the Marine Corps.

Collectively, these GAO reports illustrate the financial and operational risks inherent in assisted acquisitions and provide critical context for understanding Marine Corps procurement behavior at the MEF level. Challenges such as inconsistent policy implementation, lack of cost transparency, and inadequate data management directly affect the efficiency and oversight of DLA-managed acquisitions. These factors can influence how MEFs weigh the trade-offs between enterprise-level procurement through DLA and decentralized contracting through RCOs. Understanding these dynamics is essential to

interpreting observed sourcing patterns and evaluating how procurement channel selection impacts efficiency, standardization, and operational support across the Marine Corps.

F. SHORTFALLS IN MARINE CORPS CONTRACTING

An effective internal contracting workforce is essential for the Marine Corps to manage its own procurement needs and reduce reliance on external support. Several studies have identified shortfalls in the Marine Corps contracting workforce and give recommendations for improvement in process efficiency, personnel training, and organizational structure. Understanding these challenges is essential for evaluating the RCOs capacity for handling requirements and a possible factor for why assisted acquisitions are used so frequently.

Michael T. McComas, Donald W. Oliver, and Richard J. Harrington wrote the thesis *Analysis of the United States Marine Corps Continuous Process Improvement Program Applied to the Contracting Process at Marine Corps Regional Contracting Office – Southwest,* to identify significant process inefficiencies that contribute to delays and higher costs in contract execution. The study noted that the key barriers to effective contracting were inefficient workflows, lack of standardized procedures, and inadequate training (McComas et al., 2007). The authors recommended the development of standard operating procedures, realignment of personnel to improve workload distribution, and enhanced training for both military and civilian personnel (McComas et al., 2007). Such findings provide insight into why units may bypass RCOs for certain procurement categories and instead leverage DLA's streamlined enterprise processes. If RCOs face persistent inefficiencies or training shortfalls, units may perceive DLA's standardized processes as faster, more reliable, and better suited to meeting urgent operational needs. Conversely, where RCOs have the capacity and expertise to execute contracts efficiently, MEFs may lean more heavily on decentralized procurement pathways.

In Jason R. Griffin's thesis *An Organizational Analysis of Marine Corps Installations National Capital Region – Regional Contracting Office's Contract Closeout Process,* he found many issues that delayed contract closeouts and increased workload at the Quantico RCO (Griffin, 2018). Incomplete documentation delayed administrative

actions, and lack of oversight were common issues, and he recommended improvements, such as process standardization and effective communication, to streamline the closeout process (Griffin, 2018). These findings reinforce the idea that structural and procedural inefficiencies can reduce internal contracting responsiveness and influence MEF sourcing choices, particularly when operational timelines require faster fulfillment. If RCOs are burdened by delayed closeouts and inconsistent processes, their capacity to execute new contracts quickly and effectively may be reduced. This limitation could prompt MEFs to favor enterprise-level procurement through DLA for categories requiring rapid fulfillment or standardized solutions.

Together, these studies reveal how organizational and workforce shortfalls within RCOs may contribute to observed differences in procurement patterns across I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF. If internal contracting capability is inconsistent or perceived as less responsive, MEFs may turn more frequently to DLA for specific procurement categories. Understanding these workforce-driven dynamics provides critical context for interpreting sourcing behavior and evaluating how RCO capacity impacts the balance between enterprise-level and regional contracting support across the Marine Corps.

G. GAPS IN LITERATURE

Despite extensive research on defense procurement, several gaps remain in understanding the MEF-level sourcing behaviors between DLA and the RCOs. While prior studies have examined DoD-wide procurement trends, there is limited empirical analysis specifically focused on Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) requirements and how MEF-level commands select sourcing channels across varying operational contexts. Existing literature often aggregates data at the service or joint level, overlooking the nuanced distinctions between Marine Corps-specific procurement patterns and the operational demands unique to expeditionary forces.

Limited attention has also been paid to procurement category-specific behaviors within the USMC. GAO and DoD Inspector General reports do not evaluate how sourcing strategies vary across categories such as ground transportation, engineering equipment, and tactical communications. This absence constrains decision-makers' ability to target

reforms or adjust acquisition policies based on how individual categories align with DLA's enterprise strengths versus the RCOs' local responsiveness.

Finally, no prior study has systematically analyzed recent procurement data across I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF to compare DLA and RCO utilization patterns. Understanding these trends is essential for shaping acquisition policy and improving alignment between procurement strategy and operational requirements. By evaluating channel utilization at the MEF level and across 27 procurement categories, this study addresses an unexplored space in the literature. It provides actionable insights for policymakers, acquisition professionals, and operational commanders.

By addressing these gaps, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Marine Corps procurement behaviors, offering actionable insights into how MEFs navigate sourcing decisions across DLA and RCO channels. These findings aim to inform acquisition policy, improve operational support, and enhance the efficiency and adaptability of Marine Corps logistics.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to analyze Marine Corps procurement behavior at the MEF level, focusing on how I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF utilize DLA and the RCOs across procurement categories during FY24-FY25.

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a quantitative research design to analyze Marine Corps procurement behavior at the MEF level, comparing enterprise-managed acquisitions through DLA with decentralized procurement executed by the RCOs. The objective was to identify trends in sourcing practices across procurement categories and assess their implications for efficiency, standardization, and operational support.

B. DATA SOURCES

The analysis used contract-level data from two primary sources: DAI and FPDS-NG. DLA contract data was drawn from an HQMC-generated DAI report (Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, 2025), while RCO-specific contract data was provided by HQMC with data fully captured in FPDS-NG (Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics [Contracts Division], 2025). Together, these datasets provided a comprehensive basis for evaluating procurement activity during FY24–FY25, enabling a direct comparison of centralized versus decentralized acquisition pathways. In total, the dataset consisted of over 2,000 transactions representing $199,778,143 in obligations. By examining obligation values, procurement categories, and sourcing patterns across MEFs, the study provided an evidence-based understanding of how DLA and RCOs were utilized to meet operational and garrison requirements.

Each record included key variables necessary for analyzing procurement behavior, including:

- Channel (DLA vs. RCO)
- Fiscal Year and Date

- Contract Value
- Category
- Command Name and RCO Name
- Vendor

These variables allowed the study to identify category-specific sourcing trends, assess obligation amounts, and evaluated how procurement decisions vary across MEFs.

C. ANALYSIS PLAN

The first phase compiled and organized procurement data from FY24 and FY25. This data was aggregated by MEF, procurement channel (DLA or RCO), and procurement category to enable direct comparisons across commands. During this stage, incomplete records, outliers, and inconsistencies were identified and addressed through data-cleaning procedures to ensure accuracy and reliability.

The second phase conducted descriptive and comparative analysis. Obligations were examined by total spend, percentage by channel, and frequency of transactions in each procurement category. Comparing these patterns across MEFs highlighted differences in sourcing behaviors and identified which procurement channels dominated specific categories. This phase also assessed whether certain categories consistently favored enterprise-level sourcing through DLA or regionally tailored contracting through RCOs, revealing underlying trends that drove procurement decisions.

The final phase interpreted procurement trends within the operational context of MEF mission requirements and supply chain objectives. Findings were evaluated to determine potential efficiencies gained or operational risks introduced by favoring one procurement channel over another. These insights informed recommendations aimed at optimizing sourcing strategies, balancing enterprise-level standardization with the flexibility required to meet expeditionary operational demands.

This structured, phased approach provided a comprehensive view of MEF-level procurement behaviors. It established a foundation for assessing the strategic trade-offs between relying on DLA and leveraging RCOs to support operational readiness.

D. LIMITATIONS

This study had several limitations that affected scope and generalizability. First, the analysis was limited to two fiscal years (FY24–FY25) due to data availability. This timeframe supported a focused assessment of recent procurement behaviors but did not capture long-term trends or evolving strategies.

Second, about $2.5 million out of $114 million in DLA obligations were excluded due to insufficient detail. The absence of this data may slightly underrepresent DLA's role within specific procurement categories and could influence comparative assessments between enterprise-managed acquisitions and regionally executed contracts.

Third, the level of descriptive detail within the datasets varied considerably. Some transactions only included a broad product category without identifying the specific command, exercise, or underlying operational requirement. Others contained highly detailed product specifications, vendor information, and the name of the supported command or exercise. This inconsistency limited the ability to uniformly assess the operational drivers behind procurement decisions and constrains the precision of category-level analysis.

Additionally, some procurement categories contained overlapping items due to differences in how transactions are described within FPDS-NG and HQMC reporting systems. For example, a purchase related to a vehicle procurement could be categorized under either "Transportation" or "Vehicles, Trailers, and Sustainment Equipment," depending on how the requirement was described. While these inconsistencies are relatively minor at the aggregate level, they may have slightly affected precision when comparing sourcing patterns across individual procurement categories. This limitation should be considered when interpreting the results, but it does not materially impact the overall findings regarding DLA versus RCO utilization.

Finally, the study did not evaluate procurement outcomes such as lead times, customer satisfaction, or performance metrics due to a lack of outcome-based data. Conclusions were therefore limited to sourcing patterns and financial distributions rather than operational effectiveness.

These limitations emphasize the need for cautious interpretation of results and suggest areas for future research, including extending the temporal scope, incorporating complete obligation data, and integrating outcome-based performance measures to more effectively evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of Marine Corps procurement strategies.

V. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section compares the Marine Corps procurement trends from FY2024 through FY2025, focusing on spending through DLA versus the RCOs. Findings are organized to highlight total spending trends, MEF-level procurement channel preferences, and category-specific sourcing patterns. The goal is to identify how operational context, procurement channel characteristics, and category requirements influence sourcing decisions.

A. SPENDING BY FISCAL YEAR

Between FY2024 and June FY2025, I, II, and III MEF obligated almost $200 million in procurements through DLA and the RCOs. Roughly $114 million was obligated through DLA while $85.7 million was obligated through the RCOs. This reveals a significant reliance on external channels for procuring goods and services, despite the Marine Corps maintaining their own contracting capability.

Table 1. MEF Spending by Fiscal Year 2024–25

	RCO	DLA	Grand Total
2024	$53,924,662	$77,215,248	$131,139,910
2025	$31,843,908	$36,794,325	$68,638,233
Grand Total	$85,768,570	$114,009,573	$199,778,143

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

B. SPENDING BY MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

A quantitative analysis of DLA versus RCO obligations from FY2024 to FY2025 across the three MEFs reveals significant differences in procurement channel usage.

- I MEF demonstrated a relatively balanced distribution of obligations between the two channels, with $38.4 million (52%) routed through the RCO and $35.4 million (48%) through DLA.

- II MEF showed a clear preference for DLA, obligating $65.9 million (77%) compared to $19.6 million (23%) through the RCO.
- III MEF, by contrast, exhibited the strongest preference for internal contracting, with $27.8 million (69%) obligated through the RCO versus $12.5 million (31%) through DLA.

Table 2. Comparison of MEF Spending between DLA and RCO (FY24-25)

	RCO	DLA	Grand Total
I Marine Expeditionary Force	$38,400,899	$35,477,678	$73,878,577
II Marine Expeditionary Force	$19,558,787	$65,957,644	$85,516,432
III Marine Expeditionary Force	$27,808,883	$12,574,250	$40,383,134
Grand Total	$85,768,570	$114,009,573	$199,778,143

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

C. SPENDING BY CATEGORY

To better understand how DLA and RCO resources are being utilized, spending since FY24 was further categorized into 27 procurement categories. These categories reveal functional trends in how the Marine Corps sources different types of goods and services. Approximately $2.5 million in DLA obligations could not be categorized due to insufficient detail provided in the requirement descriptions. These records lacked the specificity necessary to determine the nature of the goods or services being procured. As a result, these transactions were excluded from category-specific analysis but are acknowledged here to ensure full transparency in total obligation reporting. For organizational clarity, tables and narratives are presented by I, II, and III MEF, however, these purchases were not made by MEF headquarters directly but by subordinate units within each MEF.

Table 3. MEF spending by Procurement Category (FY24-25)

	RCO	DLA	Grand Total
Apparel and Personal Equipment	$17,363	$129,704	$147,067
Athletic Equipment	$0	$1,991,831	$1,991,831
CBRN and HAZMAT	$0	$103,831	$103,831
Construction, Engineering, and Fabrication	$7,351,419	$696,897	$8,048,317
Containers, Packaging, and Packing Supplies	$0	$469,966	$469,966
Facilities, Furnishings, and Utilities	$1,457,572	$539,222	$1,996,795
Field and Tactical Equipment	$636,515	$24,603,981	$25,240,496
Food and Beverages	$1,458,930	$33,251	$1,492,181
Inspection	$692,874	$0	$692,874
Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance	$0	$1,417,159	$1,417,159
IT, Comm, Networking	$8,850,751	$36,769,145	$45,619,897
Maintenance and Repair	$28,337,092	$64,913	$28,402,005
Medical Supplies	$131,184	$4,581,473	$4,712,657
Miscellaneous Services	$115,097	$0	$115,097
Musical Instruments	$345,360	$0	$345,360
Office Supplies	$8,068	$39,700	$47,768
Printing	$233,925	$14,315,318	$14,549,243
Rental – Equipment	$1,240,492	$0	$1,240,492
Rental – Vehicle	$1,280,508	$0	$1,280,508
Service – Basic Life Support	$6,875,537	$0	$6,875,537
Service – Laundry	$1,948,077	$2,872	$1,950,949
Service – Waste Management	$95,697	$0	$95,697
Services – Port A John	$3,430,441	$397,571	$3,828,011
Signs and Identification Displays	$0	$45,597	$45,597
Training and Education	$6,453,349	$5,157,017	$11,610,366
Transportation	$14,107,252	$11,200,870	$25,308,122
Unknown	$0	$2,517,878	$2,517,878
Vehicles, Trailers, and Sustainment Equipment	$701,066	$8,931,375	$9,632,441
Grand Total	$85,768,570	$114,009,573	$199,778,143

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

1. Procurement Categories Sourced Exclusively Through DLA

There are five categories that have items solely sourced through DLA. The following section shows an in-depth analysis of these categories.

a. Athletic Equipment

The Athletic Equipment category accounted for $1.99 million across 12 transactions, all sourced through DLA. The data revealed a preference for BeaverFit-branded modular fitness systems, such as High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT)/Expeditionary Lockers (portable gym), BeaverDomes (shelter for outdoor fitness training), and Combat Fitness Mats (gym flooring).

- I MEF executed 3 transactions totaling $185,731 acquiring HITT Lockers and Expeditionary Locker packages to support units such as Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 13 and 1st Medical Battalion.
- II MEF was the dominant contributor, with 7 transactions totaling $1.57 million. These included two major BeaverDome procurements, $799K for 2d Maintenance Battalion and $272K for the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), as well as several Expeditionary Locker variants and Combat Fitness Shock Absorbing Fields tailored to other infantry battalions and logistics units.
- III MEF obligated $233,988 across 2 transactions for HIIT Lockers to support the Support Battalion within the MEF Information Group (MIG).

Table 4. DLA Athletic Equipment Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	3	$185,731
II MEF	7	$1,572,112
III MEF	2	$233,988
Total	12	$1,991,831

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

b. Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear and Hazardous Materials

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) and Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) procurement totaled $103,831 across three transactions, all executed through DLA, to support II MEF units with CBRN preparedness.

- One significant purchase was the ProBoard HazMat Awareness and Operations Assay Kit, totaling $67,528, supporting training and certification for personnel at Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 2, enhancing unit-level response capability in hazardous materials environments. The remaining two transactions consisted of CBRN Response Systems, with one purchase of $1,859 and a larger obligation of $34,442, both sourced to bolster II MEF's logistics and combat service support units.

Table 5. DLA CBRN and HAZMAT Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
II MEF	3	$103,831
Total	3	$103,831

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

c. Containers, Packaging, and Packing Supplies

Container-related procurement totaled nearly $470k across 18 transactions, all executed through DLA. Purchases include HAZMAT storage lockers, gear lockers, and hardshell travel cases.

- The single highest-value item was a HAZMAT locker procured by I MEF's 1st Medical Battalion, totaling $121,736. They also procured large-ticket items such as deployable storage suites and tripod cases for Headquarters Battalion.
- II MEF executed 3 transactions totaling $62,571 including Starshield cases, ACE crates, and turret crate boxes.
- III MEF submitted 5 purchases totaling $94,625, featuring gear lockers for MAG-12 and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242, command gear lockers, and urgent orders for hardshell travel cases and battery storage to support forces operating within the INDOPACOM area of operations.

Table 6. DLA Containers, Packaging, and Packing Supplies Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	10	$312,769
II MEF	3	$62,572
III MEF	5	$94,625
Total	18	$469,966

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

d. Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) procurement totaled $1,417,159 across 6 transactions, all sourced through DLA. Items in this category enhance

the Marine Corps' ability to collect, process, and analyze information across physical, cyber, and electromagnetic domains.

- I MEF accounted for the largest investment in ISR, with two high-value transactions totaling nearly $954,951, focused on acquiring a multi-domain threat analysis suite.
- II MEF executed four ISR transactions totaling $149,543, including an unmanned aerial vehicle forensic kit, spectrum analyzer, and GuardianCare cybersecurity systems.
- III MEF purchased a maritime radar sensing kit and a hydrographic sound and survey system totaling $312,665.

Table 7. DLA Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	2	$954,951
II MEF	2	$149,543
III MEF	2	$312,665
Total	6	$1,417,159

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

e. Signs and Identification Displays

Marine Corps units obligated $45,597 on signage, labels, and display systems, all sourced through DLA. This category included command post signage, restricted access and warning signs, and unit identifiers.

- I MEF completed three procurements totaling $10,163. Headquarters Company, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division (MARDIV) was responsible for the three most expensive signage purchases across the

enterprise, $3,140 for Freedom Shield 24 signage, $4,299 for a command post, and $2,724 for their operations area signage.

- III MEF executed the most transactions totaling $35,434. Its units collectively placed dozens of signage orders via DLA for various purposes, including medical signs for 7th Communications Battalion, restricted access warnings for MAG-36, ceremony and logo boards for III MEF Support Battalion, and vehicle or convoy signs for Marine Air Support Squadron 2 and Marine Air Control Squadron 4.

Table 8. DLA Signs and Identification Displays Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	3	$10,163
III MEF	40	$35,434
Total	43	$45,597

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

2. Procurement Categories Sourced Exclusively through the RCOs

There are seven categories that have items solely sourced through the Marine Corps RCOs. The following section shows an in-depth analysis of these categories.

a. Inspections

Inspection-related procurements for III MEF totaled $692,874 across four transactions supporting the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing's (MAW) Aviation Logistics Maintenance Assessment Team and Aviation Maintenance Action Team. These assessment packages provided critical diagnostic tools, inspection kits, and technical support for evaluating aircraft readiness and executing corrective maintenance.

Table 9. RCO Inspection Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
III MEF	4	$692,874
Total	4	$692,874

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

b. Miscellaneous Services

The Miscellaneous Services category included eight RCO transactions totaling $115K, supporting administrative and port service needs that fell outside traditional supply and maintenance categories.

- I MEF accounted for 7 of 8 transactions and $111,177 of total category spend. Key services included interpreter support and translation services for the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and 7th Engineering Support Battalion, including daily in-field interpreter support and customs clearance and visa facilitation services for deploying units, such as 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. Husbanding services and customs agent contracting were largely executed by JTG Corporation PTE. LTD.
- III MEF executed one transaction totaling $3,920 to support customs brokerage services for the 31st MEU.

Table 10. RCO Miscellaneous Services Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	7	$111,177
III MEF	1	$3,920
Total	8	$115,097

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

c. *Musical Instruments*

Spending on musical instruments and accessories totaled $345,360 across five transactions. These instruments were used for a wide range of mission-essential functions, including change-of-command ceremonies, memorial services, community outreach events, and joint-service military functions.

- I MEF obligated $101,893 in a single purchase for professional-grade band instruments likely to enhance ceremonial and community engagement capabilities.
- II MEF accounted for nearly half the category's total spend, obligating $166,208 across three transactions. These included a full musical instrument package through the 29 Palms RCO and specialized support items like flight cases and a double bass.
- III MEF executed one general-purpose procurement valued at $77,259, with no sub-line descriptions listed, likely reflecting a consolidated acquisition of musical equipment for internal unit needs.

Table 11. RCO Musical Instruments Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	1	$101,893
II MEF	3	$166,208
III MEF	1	$77,259
Total	5	$345,360

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

d. *Rental Equipment*

Marine Corps units across all three MEFs utilized equipment rentals to meet short-term operational needs without incurring the high upfront costs of purchasing seldom-used gear.

- I MEF obligated $91,816 mostly to support the Engineering Civic Assistance Program missions.
- II MEF led all MEFs in rental spending, including $533K on agricultural washdown equipment supporting the 24th and 26th MEUs
- III MEF spent $582,190 primarily on agricultural washdown equipment supporting MAG-36, 3rd MARDIV, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, and III MEF Headquarters fulfilled primarily by Nichibei United Corporation for recurring cleaning needs.

Table 12. RCO Rental Equipment Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	4	$91,816
II MEF	4	$566,487
III MEF	6	$582,190
Total	14	$1,240,492

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

e. Rental Vehicles

Spending on vehicle rentals totaled $1,280,508 across 14 transactions, supporting unit mobility, logistics, and exercise execution across all three MEFs. Rental items ranged from non-tactical vehicles and forklifts to water trucks, box trucks, and cranes.

- I MEF obligated $185,391 across four transactions, including over $158K for water trucks in support of the USMC Engineer Detachment in Palau, and additional rentals for buses and box trucks supporting unit mobility and Engineer Civic Action Project related missions.
- II MEF accounted for the majority of spending, obligating $851,874 across four transactions. This included $751K for non-tactical vehicles in

support of Exercise Nordic Response 24, and nearly $100K for multiple high-capacity forklifts to support supply operations.

- III MEF executed six transactions totaling $582.1K, primarily to support Exercise Resolute Dragon 23 in Japan. Rentals included cranes, forklifts, truck and van packages, and bus transport for multiple units under 1st MAW and 3rd MARDIV.

Table 13. RCO Rental Vehicle Procurement by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	4	$185,391
II MEF	4	$851,874
III MEF	6	$582,190
Total	14	$1,280,508

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

f. Services – Basic Life Support

Spending on basic life support (BLS) services totaled $6.87 million across 37 RCO transactions. These services were critical enablers of expeditionary operations, exercises, and deployments, encompassing essential life-sustaining functions such as billeting, sanitation, food service, hygiene, and base camp infrastructure support in both domestic and overseas locations.

- I MEF led in BLS spending, obligating $3.75 million across 23 procurements. Services supported multinational exercises including Balikatan, Kamandag, Tiger Strike, and unit rotations in Palawan, Berong, Sukabumi, and Oyster Bay.
- II MEF obligated $97K across two procurements for logistical life support services and shower trailers.

- III MEF accounted for $3 million in BLS spending across 12 transactions. Requirements included major base life support operations in Japan, Guam, and Tinian, covering sanitation, shelter, billeting, and hygiene sustainment for forward-deployed aviation and logistics units. Several procurements supported joint training environments, including with the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force and during exercises like Keen Edge.

Table 14. RCO BLS Service Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	23	$3,747,548
II MEF	2	$97,086
III MEF	12	$3,030,903
Total	37	$6,875,537

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

g. Services – Waste Management

Spending on waste management services totaled $95,697 across nine RCO transactions in FY24. These waste management procurements ensured mission continuity by maintaining clean and compliant operating environments during high-tempo operations and joint exercises.

- I MEF executed a single contract valued at $1,830 for general trash services in support of Marine Air Control Group operations.
- II MEF obligated $32,871 for comprehensive waste management support for the 24th MEU. The contract covered waste disposal equipment rental and associated services to maintain hygiene and environmental standards.
- III MEF led in obligations with seven contracts totaling $60,996. Most of this spending supported Exercise Resolute Dragon 23 across locations such as Kirishima and Hijyudai. III MEF also procured general waste

services, including dumpster installation, for units under 1st MAW and 3rd MARDIV.

Table 15. RCO Waste Management Service Procurements by MEF

MEF	# of Transactions	Total Spend
I MEF	1	$1,830
II MEF	1	$32,871
III MEF	7	$60,996
Total	9	$95,697

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

3. Procurement Categories Sourced through both DLA and RCOs

A majority of the 27 categories have items sourced through both DLA and the RCOs. The following section shows an in-depth analysis of these categories.

a. Apparel and Personal Equipment

Apparel and personal equipment spending totaled $147,067 across three transactions, with the majority sourced through DLA and a smaller portion through the RCO. These procurements reflected tailored support for unit-specific operational environments, especially cold-weather readiness and uniform sustainment.

- II MEF accounted for the largest share of spending, obligating $129,221 through DLA for exposure suits to support the 24th MEU. Additionally, 2d Battalion, 2d Marine Regiment procured cold weather boots through the RCO, spending $17,363 via a firm-fixed-price contract.
- III MEF, by contrast, executed a single low-dollar procurement through DLA for basic uniform components (woodland blouse and trousers), totaling $483, likely to support ongoing sustainment or individual clothing issue requirements for aviation ground support Marines.

Table 16. Comparison of DLA and RCO Apparel and Personal Equipment Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
II MEF	1	1	$17,363	$129,221	12%	88%
III MEF	0	1	$0	$483	0%	0%
Total	1	2	$17,363	$129,704	12%	88%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

b. Construction, Engineering, and Fabrication

Construction, engineering, and fabrication supported a wide range of expeditionary engineering functions from airfield improvements and road construction to billeting, infrastructure, and sustainment for training exercises.

- I MEF units accounted for the largest share of total spending, with $4.9 million in RCO-funded contract obligations. Notable examples included over $3.3 million for aggregate supporting prepositioning efforts and $739K for road construction materials in Palau. DLA-funded actions included tools, berms, and shelter flooring to support engineering units and headquarters elements.
- II MEF procured all construction materials and equipment through DLA. Key items included a $74K improved hydraulic stabilizer and over $107K for sunshades.
- III MEF units executed $2.4 million through the RCO. High-dollar efforts included runway repair materials for Ie Shima Training Facility in Okinawa ($1.9 million) and asphalt reclaimer equipment ($348K), as well as smaller buys for cement. DLA support was limited to under $130K in steel, aluminum, and fuel berm components.

Table 17. Comparison of DLA and RCO Construction, Engineering, and Fabrication Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	10	5	$4,898,286	$339,225	61%	4%
II MEF	0	3	$0	$227,879	0%	3%
III MEF	7	4	$2,453,133	$129,793	30%	2%
Total	17	12	$7,351,419	$696,897	91%	9%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

c. Facilities, Furnishings, and Utilities

Facilities procurements include a broad array of items supporting infrastructure enhancement, and workspace functionality. These purchases reflect the Marine Corps' emphasis on maintaining operational readiness through sustained investments in lighting, power, workspace furniture, and temporary facilities.

- I MEF units executed a variety of lower-dollar facility support actions through DLA, such as office carpeting, streamlight installations, and cleaning services to support MEU readiness. RCO contracts funded light towers, parachute loft support services, household furnishing rentals, and even electrical distribution for remote exercises. Notably, a $182,438 acquisition funded facilities analyst support to improve infrastructure decision-making across 1st MLG.
- II MEF accounted for the majority of total facility-related spending. A major $957,648 RCO contract provided barracks and lounge furniture for Division headquarters, while DLA purchases supported expeditionary climate control, fans, touchscreens, and warehouse access during

deployments. RCO contracts also facilitated furniture and equipment rentals and conference support services across multiple MEUs.

- III MEF focused facility spending on lighting, power, and workspace upgrades to enhance aviation and command operations. DLA contracts funded mezzanine and floodlight systems, secure furnishings, and lighting installations. Meanwhile, RCO efforts included light towers and logistics support for Guam exercises.

Table 18. Comparison of DLA and RCO Facilities Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	5	4	$460,686	$183,428	23%	9%
II MEF	3	7	$981,992	$275,955	49%	14%
III MEF	1	3	$14,895	$79,839	1%	4%
Total	9	14	$1,457,572	$539,222	73%	27%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

d. Field and Tactical Equipment

Field and tactical equipment spending totaled $25.2 million across 138 transactions, with the overwhelming majority executed through DLA. These purchases include camouflage netting kits, modular tent systems, and scalable expeditionary assemblies.

- I MEF units conducted 50 DLA transactions totaling $3.4 million, primarily for scalable, cataloged systems such as camouflage netting kits, tactical shelter assemblies, and expeditionary equipment. Meanwhile, five RCO transactions totaling $100K supported the procurement of an inflatable High Mobility Artillery Rocket System target and tents.
- II MEF units had the highest overall spend, with $18 million across 58 DLA transactions focused on high-demand expeditionary systems including cold weather and modular field systems. While fewer in number,

II MEF's four RCO purchases accounted for over $536K, funding tents during overseas exercises.

- III MEF did not use RCOs for this category but still executed 21 DLA transactions totaling $3.17 million, focused on lightweight shelters and concealment systems.

Table 19. Comparison of DLA and RCO Field and Tactical Equipment Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	5	50	$100,099	$3,424,646	0%	14%
II MEF	4	58	$536,416	$18,003,415	2%	71%
III MEF	0	21	$0	$3,175,920	0%	13%
Total	9	129	$636,515	$24,603,981	2%	98%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

e. Food and Beverage

Food and Beverage procurements totaled over $1.49 million across 26 transactions, with the vast majority executed through RCOs. These purchases reflect the Marine Corps' reliance on RCOs to meet mission-specific dining, catering, and cold storage requirements, particularly in support of forward-deployed exercises and expeditionary operations. Only a single transaction was processed via DLA, indicating limited centralized support for this category.

- I MEF units accounted for over $1.16 million in RCO contracts supporting a range of tactical and operational requirements. These included large-scale catering for MEU and MARDIV training events, contractor-facilitated dining services for foreign engagement exercises and extensive bagged ice support for engineering units deployed to Palau and the Philippines. Vendors ranged from regional logistics firms like JTG

Corporation to international food service providers operating in Southeast Asia.

- II MEF units executed three RCO contracts totaling $78,419 for catering support, including Cyprus Catering Services and lunch services for 24th MEU personnel.
- III MEF units procured a mix of catering and potable water distribution services through both RCO and DLA channels. The single DLA transaction covered a Water Distribution Unit for 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, while RCO transactions funded ice delivery on Tinian and food services for cyberspace training events and forward logistics missions.

Table 20. Comparison of DLA and RCO Food and Beverage Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	19	0	$1,165,604	$0	78%	0%
II MEF	3	0	$78,419	$0	5%	0%
III MEF	3	1	$214,907	$33,251	15%	2%
Total	25	1	$1,458,930	$33,251	98%	2%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

f. IT, Communications, and Networking

Information technology (IT), Communications, and Networking items supported a broad range of information systems, tactical communication gear, and enterprise network infrastructure. Most of this spending was executed through DLA while RCOs accounted for roughly 19% of spending.

- I MEF units represented a substantial portion of both RCO and DLA activity. They procured $4.32 million through RCOs across 25 transactions, supporting tactical IT kits, encryption systems, and unique networking components for field use. Meanwhile, I MEF executed $13 million in purchases through 115 DLA transactions, largely for standard-issue laptops, servers, routers, and cybersecurity appliances.
- II MEF units led DLA spending, obligating $23.2 million across 124 transactions. These purchases supported major IT infrastructure upgrades and included high-dollar systems like network integration kits and wideband radios. RCO usage was more limited, with 8 transactions totaling $1.78 million, generally targeting equipment not supported through standard catalogs, such as communication security handling units and expeditionary satellite systems.
- III MEF showed near-equal channel usage, spending $2.74 million via RCO and $2.19 million through DLA. The RCO facilitated 14 transactions, ranging from secure voice/data packages to mobile command post kits. Major DLA purchases included an $845k Multi-Functioning Device, network modernization for facilities, and solid-state disintegrators. Units like the 3d MARDIV and III MIG relied on the RCO to acquire regionally sourced comms systems and specialty tactical kits.

Table 21. Comparison of DLA and RCO IT, Communications, and Networking Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	25	115	$4,326,155	$13,093,851	9%	29%
II MEF	8	116	$1,779,957	$21,482,729	4%	47%
III MEF	14	29	$2,744,638	$2,192,565	6%	5%
Total	47	260	$8,850,750	$36,769,145	19%	81%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

g. Maintenance and Repair

The Maintenance and Repair category encompassed roughly $28.4 million in sustainment actions across I, II, and III MEF, with over 99% of obligations executed through the RCOs. These efforts included recurring technical services, tactical diagnostics, and field service representative support; primarily benefiting logistics and aviation units.

- I MEF recorded $6.39 million across 19 RCO transactions, with no DLA activity. Purchases included waterjet diagnostics, freezer repairs, electronic maintenance for 3D printers, and camera system maintenance for HQ units. The bulk of the value ($6 million) supported contracts for 1st MLG secondary repairable systems.
- II MEF was the only MEF to use both channels, executing $11.3 million through RCO and nearly $65,000 through DLA. RCO contracts included $7 million in corrosion control, mobile armory structural work, and scheduled maintenance for John Deere Gators and cold storage. DLA actions provided maintenance for the Virtual Air Defense System Integrator and repairs to the SS Wright, an Aviation Logistics Support Ship.
- III MEF had the fewest RCO transactions (2) but high spending at $10.65 million with nearly $9.9 million supporting secondary repairable services for 3d Maintenance Battalion. Remaining purchases funded corrosion control for small boats and minor electronic diagnostics.

Table 22. Comparison of DLA and RCO Maintenance and Repair Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	19	0	$6,387,626	$0	22.5%	0.0%
II MEF	7	2	$11,295,170	$64,913	39.8%	0.2%
III MEF	2	0	$10,654,295	$0	37.5%	0.0%
Total	28	2	$28,337,092	$64,913	99.8%	0.2%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

h. Medical Supplies

The Medical Supplies category accounted for $4.7 million across 71 transactions, with DLA executing roughly 97% of all medical procurement dollars. Purchases spanned diagnostic equipment, durable medical systems, and expeditionary care components. RCOs played a minimal role, enabling just 4 transactions totaling $131K to meet time-sensitive or non-standard requirements.

- I MEF obligated $780k through DLA across 23 transactions, acquiring field medical gear, diagnostic equipment, and consumables for sustained readiness. The two RCO transactions totaled $69K for scales and medical training.
- II MEF led all MEFs in medical procurement, obligating $3.62 million through DLA across 33 transactions. These included casualty care mannequins and medical consumable bundles. RCO obligations totaled $62K across two transactions for scales and cadaver services.
- III MEF recorded no RCO transactions but obligated $184K through DLA across 11 purchases, mostly for basic medical supplies.

Table 23. Comparison of DLA and RCO Medical Supplies Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	2	23	$69,100	$779,941	1%	17%
II MEF	2	33	$62,084	$3,617,156	1%	77%
III MEF	0	11	$0	$184,376	0%	4%
Total	4	67	$131,184	$4,581,473	2%	98%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

i. Office Supplies

The Office Supplies category accounted for $47.7K across 31 transactions, with DLA responsible for almost 83% of total spending. Procurements included administrative equipment such as binders, projectors, world clocks, and facility bulletin boards. While most needs were met through DLA's standard catalog and document services, the RCO still played a small role in meeting warfighter needs.

- I MEF obligated $13,016 through DLA across 5 transactions, including purchases of signage and one shredder. The sole RCO transaction was executed to procure a specialized time zone wall clock.
- III MEF accounted for the majority of office supply procurement volume, obligating $26,684 through DLA across 25 transactions. Purchases focused on larger-ticket items such as facility-wide projector systems, Joint Logistics Operations Center boards, and a wide array of admin staples like foam boards, binders, folders, and wall signs. There were no RCO transactions for III MEF.

Table 24. Comparison of DLA and RCO Office Supplies Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	1	5	$8,068	$13,016	17%	27%
III MEF	0	25	$0	$26,684	0%	56%
Total	1	30	$8,068	$39,700	17%	83%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

j. Printing

The Printing category accounted for $14.5 million across 507 transactions, overwhelmingly executed through DLA, which processed 503 transactions totaling $14.3 million. In contrast, the RCOs executed only four transactions valued at $233.9K, all under II MEF.

- I MEF obligated $5.75 million through 131 DLA transactions. These purchases primarily supported bulk printing of standard forms, field manuals, and administrative materials. No RCO transactions were executed.
- II MEF was the only MEF to leverage both DLA and RCOs, obligating $4.93 million through 77 DLA transactions and executing 4 RCO transactions totaling $233.9K. Notable RCO transactions included short-turnaround printing of training materials and mission-specific booklets, highlighting a need for customization, quicker delivery, or unique formatting not offered through standard DLA catalog services.
- III MEF processed the highest number of DLA printing transactions (295), obligating $3.63 million, but did not execute any RCO purchases.

Table 25. Comparison of DLA and RCO Printing Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	0	131	$0	$5,753,579	0%	39%
II MEF	4	77	$233,925	$4,931,842	2%	34%
III MEF	0	295	$0	$3,629,897	0%	25%
Total	4	503	$233,925	$14,315,318	2%	98%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

k. Services – Laundry

Laundry services accounted for a total of $1.95 million across 39 transactions, with most contracts executed through the RCOs.

- I MEF led the category with nearly half of all laundry-related spend. Much of the contracting focused on personal protective equipment laundry services, shop towels, and support to major exercises like Valiant Shield and Valiant Mark. Notably, laundry support was tailored for both aviation logistics units and operational forces. Larger task orders, such as the $140K regional laundry service orders for I MEF Support Battalion and I MIG, showed a recurring base-wide laundry support, often awarded to the same vendors across fiscal years, suggesting longstanding relationships with capable local contractors. The single DLA transaction for white linen covers at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, represented 0.03% of I MEF's total laundry spending.
- II MEF maintained sole RCO utilization for field and garrison laundry services. II MIG executed two of the largest transactions in the entire dataset: $327K for gear laundry services and $338K for extreme cold weather sleeping bag cleaning. Other units within II MEF used RCO contracts for gear cleaning, white linen services, and coverall laundering,

often sourced through regional vendors like Louise W. Eggleston Center, Inc.

- III MEF leaned heavily on RCOs to fulfill a diverse set of laundry needs across the Pacific theater. Contracts ranged from shop towel rotations and personal protective equipment laundering at MAG-36 and 3d MARDIV units, to cold-weather uniform cleaning and high-volume bulk laundry services. They relied on local providers such as Duskin Okinawa and KVG LLC. The two DLA transactions, both for Marine Wing Communications Squadron 18, totaled just over $2K and supported basic laundry services.

Table 26. Comparison of DLA and RCO Laundry Service Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	20	1	$802,381	$658	41.13%	0.03%
II MEF	9	0	$770,243	$0	39.48%	0.00%
III MEF	7	2	$375,453	$2,214	19.24%	0.12%
Total	36	3	$1,948,077	$2,872	99.85%	0.15%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

l. Services – Port a John

Port-a-John services accounted for a total of $3.83 million across 261 transactions, with the overwhelming majority executed through the RCOs.

- I MEF dominated the category, executing 201 RCO transactions totaling $2.62 million. They also executed a major transaction through DLA for a

portable bathroom trailer ($380,309) and a smaller purchase for portable latrine services ($17,261).

- II MEF recorded 20 RCO transactions totaling $213,594, with zero DLA usage.
- III MEF executed 38 RCO transactions worth $593,320, with zero DLA usage.

Table 27. Comparison of DLA and RCO Port-A-John Service Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	201	2	$2,623,527	$397,571	69%	9%
II MEF	20	0	$213,594	$0	6%	0%
III MEF	38	0	$593,320	$0	16%	0%
Total	259	2	$3,430,441	$397,571	91%	9%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

m. Training and Education

Training and Education accounted for a total of $11.61 million across 107 transactions, representing one of the most heavily utilized categories across both the RCOs and DLA. This category demonstrated a relatively balanced sourcing approach, showing how both channels fulfill distinct yet complementary training requirements across the Fleet Marine Force.

- I MEF RCO activity supported specialized training events including unit-level military free fall ticket procurement, target systems, advanced marksmanship packages, and live fire coordination support, many of which required tailored arrangements with regional vendors. DLA, on the

other hand, fulfilled high-volume, cataloged training products such as emergency simulation suites, mannequin sets, and tactical resilience software. Notably, several large DLA-funded training bundles were directed toward 1st MARDIV units in preparation for upcoming deployment cycles and exercises like Steel Knight.

- II MEF took a more DLA-centric approach, obligating $2.98M through DLA compared to $864K from the RCO. The RCO transactions covered advanced medical training courses, explosive ordnance disposal instruction, and target procurement for the 2nd MARDIV. DLA fulfilled bulk training solutions across II MEF including instructor kits and resilience suite licenses.
- III MEF executed a balanced training strategy, with $971K spent through RCOs and $139K through DLA. RCOs supported bespoke services including driver/operator certification courses, unit-level instruction for combat logistics regiments, and military free fall tickets.

Table 28. Comparison of DLA and RCO Training and Education Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	40	21	$4,618,431	$2,036,374	40%	18%
II MEF	10	15	$864,227	$2,981,403	7%	26%
III MEF	12	9	$970,691	$139,240	8%	1%
Total	62	45	$6,453,349	$5,157,017	55%	45%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

n. Transportation

Transportation accounted for a total of $25.31 million across 214 transactions, representing one of the highest overall expenditures among procurement categories. The RCO held a majority of the transactions but only made up 56% of the total spending.

- I MEF relied almost exclusively on the RCOs, obligating $8.50M across 136 transactions. The single DLA transaction, worth only $52 for "I MEF G4 Unit Transportation," suggests that DLA played no meaningful role in transportation support for I MEF. RCO transactions were primarily for motor freight services, passenger van/bus charters, and life support transportation across exercises like Balikatan, KAMANDAG, and Cobra Gold. Vendors such as La Reena Enterprise, Gudtwogo, Josea Trans, and JTG Corp provided localized services across multiple locations, including Hawaii, Iwakuni, Camp Pendleton, and the Philippines.
- II MEF obligated $11.16M across just two DLA transactions with one for $11.13M that covered air and surface transportation charges. The other $40k DLA purchase was for offload operations for the 24th MEU. In contrast, the RCO only processed 3 transportation transactions totaling $1.01M, including contract support for ambulance services, bus transportation, and a single $400K heavy equipment transport award to Beyel Brothers, Inc.
- III MEF also pursued an RCO-centric approach, executing 71 RCO transactions worth $4.60M and only a single $35K DLA obligation. III MEF's RCO spend included extensive ferry and barge services, passenger transport, and heavy equipment movement in support of operations like Resolute Dragon and intra-theater deployments to Ie Shima and across mainland Japan. Vendors such as La Reena Enterprise, IE Village, and Parsh Marine Philippines were frequently used for multi-modal lift support, leveraging the RCOs' flexibility in OCONUS environments. The lone DLA purchase was for transporting MAG-24 personnel in Hawaii.

Table 29. Comparison of DLA and RCO Transportation Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	136	1	$8,499,362	$52	34%	0%
II MEF	3	2	$1,010,872	$11,165,818	4%	44%
III MEF	71	1	$4,597,018	$35,000	18%	0%
Total	210	4	$14,107,252	$11,200,870	56%	44%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

o. Vehicles, Trailers, and Sustainment Equipment

Vehicles, Trailers, and Sustainment Equipment encompassed a wide range of tactical and support-focused procurements essential to expeditionary operations, totaling $9.63 million across 30 transactions. These included generator systems, vehicle components, refrigerated trailer leases, fuel deliveries, forklifts, cranes, lift sustainment, gantry systems, and heavy equipment rentals for construction and runway repair. Of the total spending, $8.93 million was executed through DLA while the remaining $701k came via the RCOs.

- I MEF was the most active buyer in this category, obligating over $7.9 million, with $7.76 million through DLA and $202k through the RCO. DLA procurements supported major capability requirements, including a $5.6 million unmanned aerial vehicle equipment package for MAG-13, $744K in generators for Marine Unmanned Aeriel Vehicle Squadron 1, and multiple purchases of joint light tactical vehicle windows, amphibious combat vehicle lift kits, and gantry cranes. RCO transactions focused on short-term sustainment, such as refrigerated trailers, 9-passenger van procurement, and fuel support for ground units including 3d Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 7th Marine Regiment, and 3d Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

- II MEF obligated $1.17 million across five DLA transactions, including a $236K ammo rigging system, roadmaster vehicle kits, and two lift sustainment packages for the Marine Logistics Group. No RCO transactions were recorded.
- III MEF showed the highest reliance on RCO support, obligating almost $500k. These obligations supported forklift procurement for MAG-12, fuel delivery, shower trailers, and a significant $352K heavy equipment lease to enable runway repair at Marine Wing Support Squadron 172.

Table 30. Comparison of DLA and RCO Vehicles, Trailers, and Sustainment Equipment Procurements by MEF

MEF	RCO #	DLA #	RCO $	DLA $	RCO %	DLA %
I MEF	3	15	$201,918	$7,760,249	2%	81%
II MEF	0	5	$0	$1,171,126	0%	12%
III MEF	7	0	$499,148	$0	5%	0%
Total	10	20	$701,066	$8,931,375	7%	93%

Note. Data adapted from Headquarters Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Programs & Resources, *Buyer Side Ordering Scorecard, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data]; and Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations & Logistics (Contracts Division), *RCO Procurement Dataset, FY2024–FY2025* [Unpublished raw data].

D. KEY OBSERVATIONS AND EMERGING PATTERNS

Across all MEFs, 57% of total FY24-25 spending between DLA and the RCOs were executed through DLA. This channel dominated high-volume, centrally sourced categories such as IT, Communications, and Networking ($36.7M DLA vs. $8.8M RCO), Field and Tactical Equipment ($24.6M DLA vs. $637K RCO), and Vehicles, Trailers, and Sustainment Equipment ($8.9M DLA vs. $701K RCO). Conversely, RCOs were the primary channel in categories requiring local responsiveness and tailored solutions, such as Maintenance and Repair ($28.3M RCO vs. $65K DLA) and Construction, Engineering, and Fabrication ($7.4M RCO vs. $697K DLA).

Procurement behavior varied significantly across the three MEFs, both in terms of reliance on sourcing channels and the categories in which funds were obligated. II MEF

overwhelmingly favored DLA, with 77% of its $85.5 million total obligations ($65.9 million) sourced by that channel. These obligations were concentrated in high-volume, centrally managed categories such as Field and Tactical Equipment ($18.0M), IT, Communications, and Networking ($21.5M), and Printing ($4.9M). In contrast, III MEF obligated 69% of its $40.4 million total spend ($27.8 million) through the RCO, with notable investments in Maintenance and Repair ($10.7M), Construction, Engineering, and Fabrication ($2.4M), and service contracts including Basic Life Support ($3.0M), Laundry ($375K), and Port-A-Johns ($593K). I MEF demonstrated a relatively balanced split, obligating $38.4 million through RCO and $35.5 million via DLA. However, I MEF's RCO obligations were notably directed toward Construction, Engineering, and Fabrication ($2.4M), Training and Education ($4.6M), and Transportation ($8.5M), while its DLA obligations were heavily concentrated in Vehicles, Trailers, and Sustainment Equipment ($7.8M) and IT, Communications, and Networking ($13.1M). Overall, the data revealed how each MEF leveraged procurement channels based on operational demands, geographic constraints, and the nature of the goods or services required.

Several categories were sourced exclusively through one channel, reinforcing structural tendencies in procurement behavior. Categories like Rental Vehicles and Equipment, Basic Life Support, and Waste Management were only contracted through the RCOs, emphasizing the need for flexible, local support. Conversely, CBRN and HAZMAT, Containers, Packaging, and Packing Supplies, Athletic Equipment, and Signs were procured solely through DLA, suggesting a centralized catalog-based acquisition approach.

This sourcing behavior across categories and MEFs highlights how acquisition strategies are shaped not only by cost or availability but by operational context and policy boundaries, a theme further explored in the interpretation and implications that follow.

VI: INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The procurement behavior of each MEF reflects their mission profiles, geographic positioning, and logistical support structures. II MEF heavily relied on DLA, which suggests that its procurement environment benefits from the large-scale standardization of catalogued goods and services offered through DLA. With their headquarters located on the east coast, II MEF can leverage DLA's economies of scale and rapid fulfillment capabilities for high-cost, high-demand commodities such as IT infrastructure, tactical equipment, and medical supplies without incurring significant delays or operational risk.

In contrast, III MEF's strong preference for RCO contracting reflects its forward-deployed, expeditionary nature within the Indo-Pacific theater. A majority of III MEF's spending went through the RCO which shows the priority placed on flexible, locally sourced solutions that can respond to the unique constraints of dispersed maritime and littoral operations. The high proportion of maintenance, construction, and service contracts in the III MEF portfolio suggests that sustaining forward-deployed forces requires agile contracting mechanisms capable of working directly with in-theater vendors. In this environment, the RCO appears to be favored over DLA to navigate host-nation logistics, short lead times, and the fluid demands of contingency operations.

I MEF had a balanced approach that drew equally from the strengths of both procurement channels. It used DLA for standardized, high-cost purchases, such as vehicles and IT systems. The RCO contracts were targeted towards training, transportation, and localized infrastructure projects. This dual-channel strategy may be a function of I MEF's operational diversity, spanning both domestic training and forward deployments, which allows it to benefit from catalogued goods and services while retaining the flexibility of the RCO when needed.

Altogether, these patterns show that channel selection is not random but closely aligned to operational context and the specific risk tolerance of each MEF. DLA is leveraged when standardization and reliability are the priorities, while RCOs are favored in scenarios demanding adaptability and tailored solutions. The data also indicates that

MEFs with greater operational unpredictability, such as III MEF, naturally gravitate toward more RCO-driven procurements, while those with steady, domestic-based operations lean on DLA's centralized capabilities.

Across all MEFs, the choice between DLA and the RCOs were deliberate and closely tracked the nature of the requirement. Categories sourced almost exclusively through one channel suggest institutional norms or structural constraints that shape procurement decisions, while hybrid categories highlight areas where units exercise discretion based on situational factors.

Ultimately, the findings show that the Marine Corps does not currently apply a uniform sourcing strategy at the MEF level. Instead, procurement behavior reflects a blend of mission-specific requirements, category characteristics, and organizational tendencies. This diversity in approach can be both a strength, allowing flexibility, and a potential risk if it leads to inconsistent support, inefficiencies, or underutilization of internal capabilities.

A. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The procurement patterns identified in this study carry significant implications for how the Marine Corps should shape policy and allocate resources between sourcing channels.

First, the heavy reliance of II MEF on DLA highlights the advantages of standardized and established distribution networks for high-volume and catalogued goods and services. However, this dependency also brings up a potential vulnerability, which is that overreliance on external agencies for mission-critical items may limit operational agility if DLA experiences delays, prioritizes other customers, or is constrained by global demand. Leaders should evaluate whether II MEF's procurement posture sufficiently hedges against such risks, particularly in scenarios requiring rapid, theater-specific support.

Second, III MEF's extensive use of RCOs demonstrates its value for geographically dispersed expeditionary operations. RCOs provide flexibility, local vendor engagement, and the ability to tailor solutions to unique operational environments. However, sustaining this capability requires adequate staffing, training, and contracting authority. The Marine

Corps must ensure that resource allocation to RCOs, particularly in forward-deployed regions, matches their operational load and complexity.

Third, I MEF's balanced sourcing approach suggests a potential model for other MEFs, combining the enterprise reach and standardization provided by DLA with the tailored responsiveness of regional contracting through RCOs. Policy guidance could formalize best practices from this hybrid model by identifying procurement categories or operational conditions in which one channel is best suited over the other, thereby promoting consistency in sourcing decisions while preserving the flexibility required to meet mission demands.

Across the entire Marine Corps, the data indicated that certain categories are almost exclusively sourced through one channel, regardless of MEF. While this may reflect procurement efficiency, it may also indicate institutional inertia that prevents alternative sourcing strategies from being considered. High-spend categories such as Field and Tactical Equipment, Containers, Packaging, and Packing Supplies, and Athletic Equipment, currently dominated by DLA, may contain items the RCOs could procure at a lower total cost or with reduced lead times. Periodic reviews of category-level sourcing decisions could help ensure that the Marine Corps is not missing opportunities to optimize cost, speed, and mission alignment.

From a resource allocation perspective, these findings suggest the need for a deliberate investment strategy in both channels. The Marine Corps must collaborate with DLA to ensure their requirements remain visible and prioritized within the broader supply chain. It must also ensure each RCO is equipped with the adequate staff, tools, and warrant capacity to meet the surging demands of the specific RCO.

By aligning policy with the demonstrated strengths of each sourcing channel, and by resourcing them accordingly, the Marine Corps can enhance procurement efficiency, maintain operational flexibility, and reduce risk in contested environments.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the observed procurement trends across the MEFs and the complementary but uneven utilization of DLA and the RCOs, several targeted recommendations are offered to improve efficiency, responsiveness, and alignment with operational priorities.

1. Incorporate Procurement Channel Analysis into MEF-Level Planning

Establish an annual review of procurement data by MEF G-4 and Comptroller staff to assess channel utilization, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with mission requirements. Integrating this analysis into annual operational planning will allow MEFs to make informed adjustments before the next fiscal cycle.

2. Evaluate RCO Capacity in each MEF

Conduct a formal assessment of RCO staffing, training, and contract vehicle availability, particularly in forward-deployed environments like III MEF, to determine whether current resources align with operational demands. This evaluation should consider workload, procurement timelines, and the complexity of local requirements before determining if additional support or structural adjustments are warranted.

3. Mitigate Institutional Inertia Through Training and Incentives

Provide targeted acquisition training to supply officers and contracting staff to challenge long-standing procurement habits that are misaligned with current capabilities. This can be done through Professional Military Education courses or in the Supply Chain Management Officer Course curriculum. Incentivizing units to meet sourcing efficiency benchmarks, such as cost savings or reduced procurement lead time, can accelerate adoption of improved sourcing practices.

4. Improve Data Visibility and Cross-MEF Sharing of Best Practices

Create a standardized reporting dashboard accessible to all MEFs and HQMC that highlights category-level spend, channel utilization, and performance outcomes. Sharing successful sourcing strategies across MEFs will reduce redundancy and improve institutional learning.

5. Identify and Pilot RCO Entry into DLA-Dominated Categories

Conduct periodic reviews of categories heavily sourced through DLA to determine if RCO-led procurement could achieve better pricing, shorter lead times, or improved alignment with mission-specific requirements. Start with small-scale contracts in select categories to test cost and performance differences and use the results to inform long-term sourcing policy.

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VII: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study revealed several areas where further inquiry could deepen understanding and improve decision-making. Expanding the scope of research would not only validate the findings presented here but also uncover additional factors influencing channel selection, cost efficiency, and operational effectiveness. The following suggestions outline potential avenues for future study that build on this work and address identified knowledge gaps.

A. COST AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES BY PROCUREMENT CHANNEL

Examine whether procurement through DLA or the RCOs correlates with differences in cost efficiency, delivery timelines, or operational performance. This would require linking procurement data to fulfillment times, total cost of ownership, and user satisfaction metrics.

B. RCO CAPACITY AND RESOURCING ASSESSMENT

Investigate whether current RCO staffing, expertise, and contracting authority levels are sufficient to meet surges in demand, particularly in categories where they are the primary source of procurement.

C. SUPPLY OFFICER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Use surveys, interviews, and scenario-based exercises to better understand how supply officers select procurement channels. This research could validate the effectiveness of targeted training, such as additions to the SCMOC curriculum, in improving channel selection decisions.

D. ANALYSIS OF OTHER PROCUREMENT CHANNELS

Explore the role of other sourcing mechanisms, such as the General Services Administration or the Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card program, in supplementing or competing with DLA and RCO procurements.

E. ASSESS THE IMPACT OF PROCUREMENT BEHAVIOR ON THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Analyzing past MEF operations to determine how procurement choices influenced mission timelines sustainment reliability, and responsiveness under different operational conditions could help refine channel selection policies to better align with theater-specific requirements.

F. POTENTIAL FOR RCOS TO COMPETE IN DLA-DOMINATED CATEGORIES

Analyze whether RCOs could cost-effectively procure items that are currently sourced almost exclusively through DLA. This research would assess potential cost savings, lead time reductions, and mission-specific customization benefits, helping determine if rebalancing certain categories toward RCO procurement could improve overall efficiency and operational alignment.

VIII: CONCLUSION

This study examined how I MEF, II MEF, and III MEF utilized DLA and their respective RCOs during FY24-25, identifying patterns in procurement channel selection and the operational factors driving those decisions. Across all MEFs, DLA dominated categories demanding high-volume procurements, while RCOs excelled in locally responsive, service-intensive requirements. Each MEF, however, displayed distinct channel preferences shaped by their operational environment. III MEF relied heavily on their RCO, II MEF procured through DLA more, and I MEF had a balanced procurement rate between both channels.

The findings confirm that both channels are essential and complementary, but their optimal use depends on aligning procurement decisions with mission demands, geographic constraints, and resource availability. They also reveal opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce delays, and strengthen the Marine Corps' ability to match procurement methods to operational needs. By enhancing RCO capacity where required, increasing supply officer training on channel selection, and refining how it works with external organizations like DLA, the Marine Corps can maximize the strengths of both DLA and its RCOs. Ultimately, a deliberate and data-driven approach to procurement channel selection improves resource utilization and sustains operational readiness across the force.

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