

APPENDIX B: USDA Category Management Exception Request

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
CATEGORY MANAGEMENT EXCEPTION REQUEST**

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Department of Agriculture Category Management policy require that **OMB Mandatory Best-In-Class (BIC) Contract Solutions and USDA Alternative Solutions/USDA Mandatory Solutions** must be used for the purchase of common goods and services. Should the Contracting Officer find that one of these solutions does not meet their need or is not in the best interest of the Department, they must submit an Exception Request to the Senior Procurement Executive for review and approval. Exception Requests must be submitted no less than nine (9) months prior to execution of each contract action, including exercise of options and issuance of task/delivery orders; eighteen (18) months prior to any follow-on contract or new procurement award. Exception Requests shall be submitted via email to the PPD at [ProcurementPolicy@usda.gov](mailto:ProcurementPolicy@usda.gov).

**PART A. CONTRACT INFORMATION**

<b>Mandatory Solution Covering Requirement</b>	[Identify the OMB or USDA Mandatory Solution the submitter is seeking to receive an exception from.]
<b>Contract Number (or “New”)</b>	[Inset Contract Number Here]
<b>Solution Description</b>	[Include a description of the requirement (include applicable PSCs and/or NAICS codes), scope (what’s included and what is not), objectives, customers, and any other important information that clearly articulates what will be acquired under the proposed contract]
<b>Program Name</b>	[Insert Program Name]
<b>Category</b>	[Select OMB Category]
<b>Sub-Category</b>	[Select OMB Sub-Category]
<b>Existing Solution</b>	[Select Yes or No]
<b>Planned Solicitation Release Date</b>	[Select Expected Release Date]
<b>Planned Contract Award Date</b>	[Select Expected Award Date]
<b>Availability for other Agencies</b>	[Select Availability for use by other Agencies]
<b>Contract Period of Performance</b>	[Include base and all option periods. If submission is for a proposed solution, use estimated period of performance]
<b>Contract Value</b>	[Include total contract value and the cost for each option period. If submission is for a proposed solution, use estimated values]
<b>Prior FY Spend</b>	[Insert Total Amount of Prior FY Spend for this Requirement]
<b>Solution Tier</b>	[Select Tier]
<b>Mission Area</b>	<b>Choose an item.</b>
<b>Point of Contact</b>	[Insert POC for this action]
<b>Submission Date</b>	[Select Submission Date]

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**PART B. JUSTIFICATION CODE**

Utilize the below to chart identify the Justification Code that describes the rationale for using the proposed solution submitted under this Exception Request.

Category	Description	Selection
<b>A</b>	<b>BETTER VALUE</b>	
1	The agency expects to negotiate better pricing for products or specified services.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The agency expects to negotiate better terms and conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B</b>	<b>UNAVAILABILITY</b>	
1	The agency expects to use contract types not available on existing BICs or other Government-wide contracts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The agency's needs cannot be adequately met by existing BICs or other Government-wide contracts (e.g., the agency needs a type of expertise not available on the existing contract).	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	A <u>portion</u> of the agency's requirements fall outside the scope of the existing BIC or other Government-wide contract (state if the requirements falling outside the existing contract are unique to the agency).	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	There is an established industrial base for the work that is not adequately reflected on existing BICs or other Government-wide contracts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	There is no BIC or Government-wide contract for the type of product or service the agency is acquiring.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE COST</b>	
1	The agency believes the cost to spend is significantly lower for agency to acquire itself than to pay the stated fee.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D</b>	<b>OTHER CONTRACTING CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
1	The agency is at risk of not meeting its small business contracting goals and does not believe its requirement can be adequately met by small businesses on an existing contract or is seeking to grow its small business base. This includes local contracts set-aside for small business pursuant to a comprehensive, organized agency-level strategy, as approved by the agency and OMB.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The information in the Acquisition Gateway is insufficient for the agency to make a suitability determination	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Other considerations not captured in the list above – explain.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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**PART C. RATIONALE NARRATIVE**

Provide written responses which demonstrate the rationale for using the proposed solution.

**1. Explain why existing Tier 1, 2 or 3 contracts are not suitable for this requirement.**

[Enter response here]

**2. Explain how data can be shared across the Department.**

[Enter response here]

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- 3. Provide a comparison of the pricing between the proposed solution and the applicable mandatory solution.**

[Enter response here]

- 4. Identify the savings and efficiencies provided by the proposed solution compared to what could be achieved under the applicable mandatory solution.**

[Enter response here]

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- 5. Describe alternative approaches considered for using the mandatory solution (e.g. breaking up the requirement, purchasing only what is needed to meet the most current need), the pros and cons of the alternative approaches considered, and how the use of the proposed solution still demonstrates the overall best value to the government throughout the life of the proposed contract.**

[Enter response here]

- 6. Describe actions the requiring activity will take to eliminate or mitigate the need for an exception in the future.**

[Enter response here]

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- 7. Detail other data and information that provides insight into the particular circumstances, facts, or reasoning supporting the use of the proposed solution (e.g. acquisition plan information, market research findings, etc.).**

[Enter response here]

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**PART D. MISSION AREA CERTIFICATION AND CONCURRENCE**

**CONTRACTING OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the Contracting Officer, I certify that this Exception Request is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Additional comments:

[Enter response here]

**X**

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Contracting Officer

**MISSION AREA SENIOR CONTRACTING OFFICIAL CONCURRENCE**

As the MASCO, I concur with this Exception Request.

Additional comments:

[Enter response here]

**X**

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MASCO

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**PART E. RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL**

**CATEGORY MANAGEMENT LEAD RECOMMENDATION**

As the USDA Category Management Lead, I recommend that the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) take the following action:

Approve  Reject  Return with Comments

[Enter response here]

**X**

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Category Management Lead

**SENIOR PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVE APPROVAL**

As the SPE, I take the following action:

Approve  Reject  Return with Comments

[Enter response here]

**X**

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Senior Procurement Executive