Not Your Uncle ... SAM

Tips for Navigating the System for Award Management

January 22, 2013
Background

• SAM – the System for Award Management – was designed to initially integrate three federal acquisition data systems:
  – Central Contractor Registration (CCR)
  – Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA)
  – Excluded Parties List System (EPLS)

• Several more stand-alone databases are to be integrated into SAM over time.
Challenges Along the Way

- Oct. 2011 – Full implementation of SAM delayed when GSA cut-off additional development funding.
- May 2012 – Launch scheduled, then postponed.
- July 2012 – SAM launched, but taken off-line a few days later, then re-launched.
- Immediately – Access issues reported by vendors and contracting offices alike.
- Aug. 2012 – DoD temporarily exempts vendors from registering in SAM.
The SAM Plan

• A single Federal system that combines multiple legacy databases.

• [https://www.sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov)

• Vendors advised to:
  – Check migration of their records.
  – Record all user ID’s and passwords.
  – Protect and safeguard user name and password.
  – Use Commercial and Gov’t Entity (CAGE) Code after registration.
  – Be aware registration is a key to being considered for awards and contract payments.
SAM’s Importance to Multiple Audiences

- Dun & Bradstreet, the SBA, and Contracting Officers
  - Dynamic Small Business Search
    - NAICS
    - PSC/FSC
    - DUNS
    - CAGE CODE
    - Set Asides - SB, 8(a), SDVOSB, WOSB, EDWOSB, HUBZone

- Banking (National Finance Center)
  - Payment Information
  - Banking information

- IRS (Internal Revenue Service)
  - Valid TIN/EIN
  - Current Tax status

- State & Local Agencies can use search function
  - Identify potential vendors
  - Capabilities and references

- Prime Vendors
  - Primes searching for subs
  - Search for specific categories of subs to fulfill of subcontracting goals
  - Subs searching for Primes
The Big Picture

SAM’s Role in the Procurement Process from a Government Perspective


- Receive bids
- Validate entity status
- Validate entity performance
- Check wage determinations
- Report contract actions
- Report performance

- Post solicitation and tech data
- Includes FedTeDS
- Includes FedBizOpps.gov
- Includes FedReg
- Includes ORCA
- Includes EPLS
- Includes CPARS and FAPIIS
- Includes Wage Determinations OnLine.gov
- Includes FSRS

User action → Entity data → Contract data

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
Central Contractor Registration
FedBizOpps.gov
ORCA
EPLS
PPRS
Wage Determinations OnLine.gov
FPDS Next Generation
eSRS

Includes FedReg
Includes CPARS and FAPIIS
Includes FSRS
SAM’s Promise

Old Approach

- **Siloed** – Separate systems, each with a separate login
- **Redundant** – Overlapping data creates opportunity for error and complicates changes
- **Separate** – Multiple vendors at many hosting locations, managed separately with varying levels of service

New Approach

- **1 Login** – Functionality accessible at one online location to streamline the process
- **1 Data Source** – Centralized, normalized data to eliminate potential for conflicting values and improves agility to deal with future changes
- **1 Host** – Consolidated hosting by GSA to reduce O&M costs
A Cartoon Circulating in the Contracting Community
Frustrations Abound

• System slow to respond.
• Navigation problems.
• Missing data fields.
• User familiarity with CCR not compatible with SAM.
• Help desks overwhelmed.
What Are the Problems?

More importantly, What Are the Work-Arounds?

- What vendors need to know.
- How contracting personnel can help vendors.
“SAM’s Rings”

- Core Data Issues
- Functionality Issues
- Bandwidth Issues
“SAM’s Rings”

Core Data Issues

Functionality Issues

Bandwidth Issues
# Need for Familiarity with User Guide

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More Important Topics

Click on These Links:
- Government User Help Guide Regarding Small Business Information
- SAM User’s Guide
How to register your entity to be eligible for CONTRACTS in SAM:

Before you register, you need to know the following:

**What is an Entity?**
In SAM, your company/business/organization is referred to as your “Entity”.
- You must register your entity in SAM as an “Entity”.
- REGISTRATION is complete when your entity has a SAM account. See the Getting Started Guide.

**Your Entity’s DUNS Number**
You need a DUNS number to register in SAM.
- If you do not have a DUNS number, you can request a DUNS number for free by visiting D&B at [http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform](http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform).
- It takes 1-2 business days to obtain a DUNS number.

**Your Entity’s Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)**
You need your entity’s Tax ID Number (TIN) and taxpayer name (as it appears on your last tax return). Foreign entities that do not pay employees within the U.S. do not need to provide a TIN.
- A TIN is an Employer Identification Number (EIN) assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- Sole proprietors may use their Social Security Number (SSN) assigned by the Social Security Administration (SSA) if they do not have a TIN, but please be advised it will not be treated as privacy act data in SAM.
- To obtain an EIN visit: [www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0, id=102767,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0, id=102767,00.html).
- Activating a new EIN with the IRS takes 2-5 weeks.

Steps For Registering Your Entity in SAM:
1. Go to www.sam.gov and log in.
2. Register your Entity under “Manage Entity” on your “My Account” page.
3. Enter Business Information (TIN, etc.)
4. Select your type of Entity.
5. Select “Yes” if your business is based on contracts.
6. Enter CAGE code if you have one. If not, one will be assigned to you after your registration is completed. Foreign registrants must enter the CAGE code.
7. Enter company information (business types, organization structure, etc.).
8. Complete “Representations and Certifications”
   - FAR Responses
   - Architect-Engineer Responses
   - DFARS Responses
9. Complete “Points of Contact”
10. Your entity registration will become active after 3-5 days when the IRS validates your TIN information.

How do I get more information? Take a look at the SAM User Guide.

- Go to Our Website: [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)
- Contact the SAM Help Desk: [www.fsd.gov](http://www.fsd.gov)
Where to Find Help

Quick Start Guides for Updating/Renewing Registrations

Description: A short reference guide to help you renew or update your registration that was previously in CCR (and in some cases ORCA) and is now in SAM.

Quick Start Guides for Contract Registrations

Description: A short reference guide on what you must know to register your entity for contracts in SAM.

Quick Start Guides for Grant Registrations

Description: A short reference guide on what you must know to register your entity for grants and federal assistance in SAM.
More SAM Website Help

Demonstration Videos

The following videos will help familiarize you with the features and functionalities of SAM. Click on a video to launch the video in a new window. Adobe Flash Player is required.

SAM Overview Video

Description: New to SAM? This video will introduce you to SAM and how it fits into GSA IAE suite of systems.

Register a New Entity in SAM to be Eligible for Government Contracts

Description: Learn how to create an Entity Management registration so that your entity is eligible for Government contracts.

https://www.sam.gov
SAM Data Entry Tips

- Self-formatting
- *Tab* from one field to another
- Attention to detail is paramount
- No abbreviations (or be consistent)
- No punctuations
- No dashes
- No commas
- CAPS or lower case – no difference
Special Note about NAICS Codes

The 2012 version of the North American Industry Classification Standards (NAICS codes) are now in effect and utilized as a part of the Small Business Administration's size standards.

- When an entity updates SAM, it will be required to update NAICS to ensure compatibility with 2012 codes.
- If SBA’s size standard changed, this could affect your small business status. SAM will place an exclamation point (!) next to the "Yes" or "No" answer in the Reps & Certs section to show that it should be reviewed.
- When you update your Reps & Certs using the 2012 standards, the exclamation point will be removed.
SAM Tips for Vendors

• Know all your data (DUNS number, TIN, EFT data, NAICS code, SB size-standard, etc.) before starting.

• Ensure your Internet browser is set-up correctly.  (Tips coming up!)

• Your registration should become active within 3-8 business days, after IRS validation.
  – *Allow at least 3-5 business days to complete SAM if you are using an existing TIN.*
  – *Allow at least 8 business days to complete your SAM if you have to apply for a TIN with IRS.*
  – *CAGE code assigned within 3 business days after IRS/TIN Validation.*

• You will receive a confirmation e-mail with your CAGE code once your SAM registration is activated.
Remember!

There must be an *exact match* between the data entered in SAM and your D&B (DUNS) and IRS data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If DUNS says:</th>
<th>Do <strong>NOT</strong> type this in SAM:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hwy 20 Ave</td>
<td>Highway 20 Avenue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating a SAM Account

https://www.sam.gov
Creating a SAM Account

Choose an Individual Account
- If you need to perform tasks such as register your entity (legacy CCR/FedReg and ORCA functionality).
- If you need to create and manage exclusion records (legacy ETLS functionality).
- If you require CCR Tools type of functionality to view non-public level data for entity management registration records and exclusion records.
- If you are the only person in your entity who needs access to the extract/web service.
- Unless you know you need a system account, you should create an individual account.

Once the account is created, you will have the opportunity to associate yourself with either a federal or a non-federal entity. This can be performed by either registering your non-federal entity, migrating your roles from legacy systems or by requesting roles with an entity.

Click the "Create an Individual Account" button below to begin.

Choose a System Account
- If the account involves system-to-system communication or you are automating your pull of the data.
- If multiple people in your entity need access to the same extracts/web services. You may have up to three POCs on each System account.
- You will not be able to request roles with an entity.

* You cannot register an entity or manage exclusion records with a system account. This account is only for system to system communications.

In SAM, access to data is granted by Functional Area and Sensitivity Level. Once you have been granted access, you can access the respective data packages via any protocol and file formats in which they are distributed. It is recommended that a SAM specific email address be established for all communications.

Click the "Create a System Account" button below to begin.
Creating a SAM Account

- Only basic information about the user is required.

- A user will receive an email to validate his/her access to the email address associated with the account.
- Users have 1 password for all functionality.
- SAM defines password requirements.
- There are three security questions.

- Passwords expire every 180 days
Vendors and award recipients are now called **“Entities.”**

Entity Registration is organized in four steps:

1. **Core Data** – Name, address, etc.
2. **Assertions** – Information used to determine small business status, NAICS codes, etc.
3. **Representations and Certifications** – Federal Acquisition Regulation compliance
4. **Points of Contact** – Contact details for specified roles

SAM walks users through the Entity Registration (or validation) process in four steps.
“SAM’s Rings”

- Core Data Issues
- Functionality Issues
- Bandwidth Issues
Critical Browser Set-Up Tips

- Order of browser preference: Firefox, Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE)
- Disable pop-up blockers
  - Ensure your browser is up-to-date
  - Affects IE 7 & 8 & 9, Firefox, and Chrome
- Enable TLS 1.0 (transport label security)
- Enable JavaScript & Cookies
- If using IE, click on the icon that looks like a “torn piece of paper” or on the “gear”
  - Adjust compatibility setting
SAM Tips - 1 of 5

• When selecting an Entity, do not select “non-profit” unless you are a bonafide non-profit. *Reason:* Non-profits are considered large businesses in the eyes of the federal government.

• When you are asked if you want to make your “Core Data” information public, vendors should say **YES!** (Only public information is displayed, not sensitive financial information.)
SAM Tips - 2 of 5

• Migrating an *expired* record requires FSD (Fed Service Desk) assistance.
• Every page of SAM must be updated.
  – Click **Save** and then **Proceed**.
• POC must open all pages in the review process.
• To select a NAICS, it must be highlighted and moved.
• There is a difference between “draft”, “WIP” (core data), and “submitted.”
SAM Tips - 3 of 5

• Limit NAICS code to primary, and use the 2012 version.
• On the Financial screen, your bank’s phone number is formatted differently than phone numbers in other parts of SAM: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
• Don’t jump around. Stay the course.
• Pay attention to the details and be patient.
• If your SAM registration can wait, do just that ... WAIT.
• Be aware that the SAM website uses a font named “Georgia.”

• “Georgia” displays numbers like this: 0123456789 and a small “o” like this: 0123

• This means that you must be very careful when you type (and read) a zero, a small “o”, and a capital “O” – and not confuse them with one another.
Towards the end of your registration, look for a button labeled “Register or Update SBA Profile.”

This takes you to SBA’s Dynamic Small Business Search database.

Small businesses absolutely want to perform this task.

**DO NOT** miss this step.

*Screen shot on next slide shows what the transition page looks like...*
SAM’s Interface with the SBA’s DSBS

All small businesses should complete this!
Why Must SAM & DSBS Be Perfect?

- Contracting Officers routinely use SAM to verify vendor eligibility.
- Contracting Officers make judgments about a vendor’s wherewithal to perform – and attention-to-detail – based, in part, on the completeness of your SAM file.
- Primes look in SAM/DSBS for potential subs.
- Businesses look for potential teaming partners in SAM/DSBS.
“SAMs Rings”

- Core Data Issues
- Functionality Issues
- Bandwidth Issues
Bandwidth Limits – Tech and Human

• Help desks are swamped.
• Try SAM website during non-peak hours.
• Contact your local PTAC for “power user” assistance.
  – www.aptac-us.org
  – Scroll down and select state.
• Don’t pay for what you can do yourself.
  – Don’t delegate the management and control of your records.
This Is *Not* SAM!
(http://www.sam.gov takes you to SAM)

Googling “sam.gov” may lead you to a “paid” site like this.
DoD’s Temporary Deviation from SAM

Remember: While DoD temporarily exempts vendors from SAM registration, SAM registration is still a requirement in order to receive a contract payment!
WOSB and EDWOSB Verification

- SAM may omit a company’s Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) or Economically Disadvantaged Small Business (EDWOSB) designation.
- Contracting Officers must verify a concern’s status in SBA’s WOSB Program Repository, which is separate from and independent of SAM.
- It is the obligation of the WOSB or EDWOSB to provide current, accurate and complete documents to the CO for each contract award, via the Repository.
Important Links
(These are hyperlinks)

- SAM
- SAM Quick Start Guide
- SAM User’s Guide
- SAM User Help Regarding Small Business Information
- SAM Registration Tips – 2012
- Dynamic Small Business Search
- WOSB/EDWOSB Verification
Recap of Recent SAM News

(These are hyperlinks)

- 10/24/2012 - GSA appoints a new duo to run SAM
- 8/28/2012 - Browser Settings Can Affect SAM's Performance
- 8/24/2012 - DoD Temporarily Alters Vendor Registration Rule Due to SAM's Launch Shortcomings
- 8/15/2012 - GSA Issues IBM a Letter of Concern for SAM Problems
- 8/1/2012 - It's a Mistake to Rush into the SAM Vendor Registration Process
- 7/24/2012 - CCR Closed until SAM emerges on July 30th
- 5/21/2012 - SAM Implementation Changed from May 29 to the End of July 2012
- 10/25/2011 - SAM Deployment Likely To Be Delayed, GSA Might Replace DUNS
Visit: www.ContractingAcademy.gatech.edu for daily government contracting news updates, training opportunities, and more. For an updated version of this presentation, go to: http://tinyurl.com/bvp58aj