



FOUR TIPS...

FOR NAVIGATING EIS NETWORK TRANSITION

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Since the start of the pandemic, there has been an unprecedented volume of network traffic from Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Slack, Workday, Blackbaud, Granicus, SAP and others. Traditional telecom services simply can't keep up with the increased traffic demands.

Fortunately, *Software-defined Wide Area Network (SD-WAN)* technologies solve common issues, such as bandwidth congestion "at the edge" and enable government agencies to provide a consistent, positive user experience across all locations.

Creating a hybrid architecture — by adding managed broadband services to existing MPLS networks — effectively transforms and modernizes these end points in relatively short order.

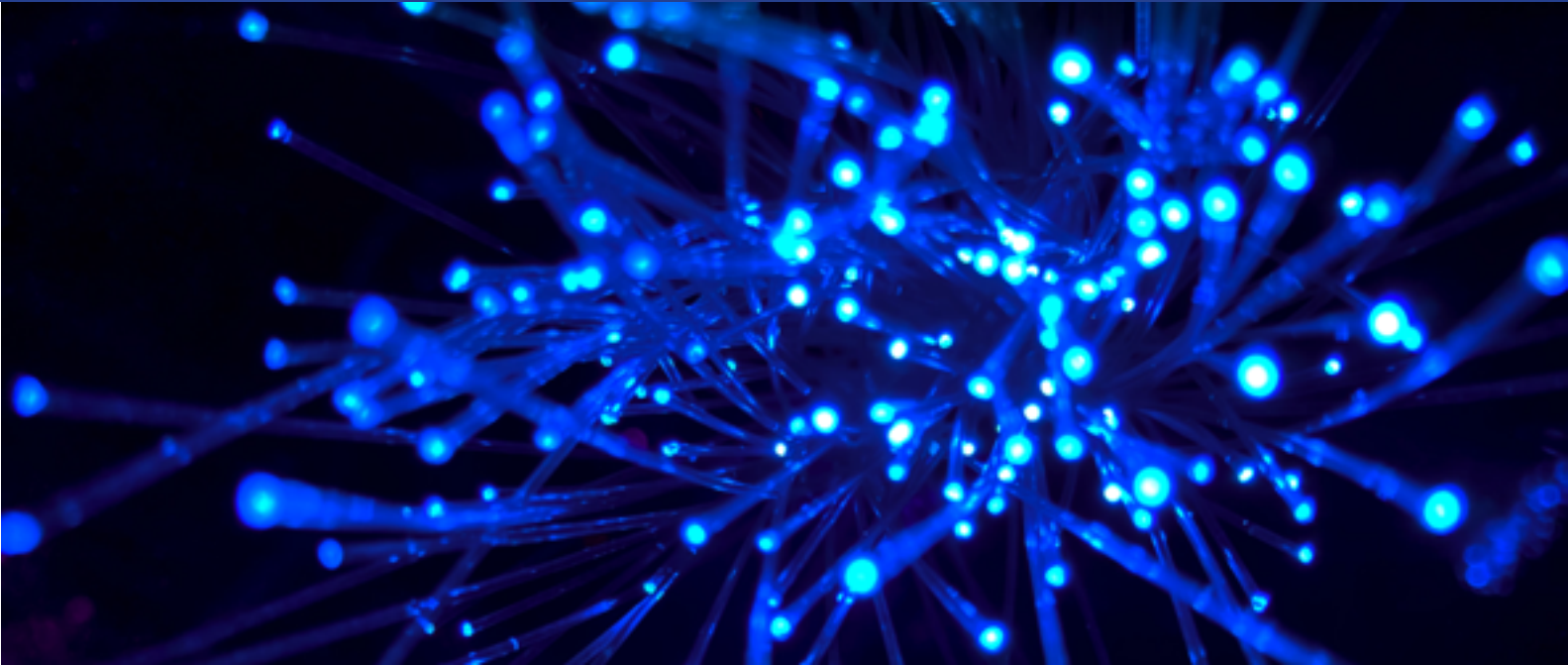
Recent modifications to the **Enterprise Infrastructure Solution (EIS)** procurement vehicle now enables federal agencies to modernize their IT infrastructure with SD-WAN technologies. Here are four tips for navigating the EIS network transition.

ISSUE A STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Historically, agency IT teams have designed a dedicated network and outlined the specifications in a *Statement of Work* seeking the lowest cost technically acceptable. Today, agencies are better served by creating a *Statement of Objectives (SOO)* to summarize their high-level requirements for an acquisition.

Some examples of an SOO include:

- *Provide robust IT infrastructure services for all operations, logistics and maintenance functions.*
- *Provide system and network administration for all systems and applications located on the LANs.*
- *Implement a single help desk/service center capability to coordinate all maintenance issues with all customers.*



Rather than dictating technical specifics, the SOO encourages bidders to offer innovative and creative solutions that meet the agency's needs.

IDENTIFY CURRENT AND FUTURE APPLICATION DEMANDS AT FIELD OFFICES

Along with their SOO, agencies should document all current and desired applications in use across their enterprise. Case studies or examples can illustrate operational processes or public-facing interactions that the network must be able to support. These insights will help vendors understand bandwidth requirements on a site-by-site basis — a critical step to creating a modern and cost-effective network.

EVALUATE SD-WAN AS A MANAGED SERVICE

One of SD-WAN's greatest strengths is its ability to leverage various broadband transports — such as cable, fiber, 4G and satellite — to connect field office locations securely, reliably, and cost-effectively.

With SD-WAN, agencies can maximize existing bandwidth speed and performance without having to add new lines or links. Intelligent SD-WAN routers can automate path selection and other optimization features to yield instant cost and performance benefits, where they're needed most.

However, not all SD-WAN solutions are created equal: it's important for agencies to require prime contractors to propose multiple SD-WAN options and not simply their own, proprietary offering.

SD-WAN can also be implemented as part of a managed service to ease the burden associated with managing a complex distributed network.

For example, agencies with multiple field offices must manage hundreds of different *internet service providers (ISPs)* with different *Service Level Agreements (SLAs)*, contracts and billing structures.

An experienced Managed SD-WAN provider can simplify this process. Hughes accomplishes this task by tapping into the company's well-established global network of more than 400 ISPs. This ensures consistent performance across a customer's entire network, which is how tens of thousands of deployed SD-WAN sites are managed by Hughes.

SECURE ALL THE NETWORK'S ENDPOINTS

SD-WAN can also offset security concerns, especially when implemented as a managed service.

Under this scenario, SD-WAN provides next-generation firewalls with around-the-clock monitoring for each of the hundreds or thousands of endpoints on a network.

Additionally, SD-WAN is ideally suited to support the emerging cybersecurity architecture known as **SASE**, or **Secure Access Service Edge**, which applies policy-based security measures at the network's edge — no matter where users, applications or devices are located.

Because SD-WAN can be easily implemented on existing infrastructure, agencies can start now by modernizing at the edge with a hybrid approach — adding broadband connectivity to existing MPLS lines for diverse, dual-path networking.

With SD-WAN technologies added to EIS, agencies no longer need to be limited by the connectivity options available at their field offices, or by local service providers. They can meet application demands and user expectations and look for opportunities to evolve their operations to better serve constituents.

Starting from the edge inward gives an agency time to phase the modernization process across the network — all without impacting the core, which in most cases already has adequate bandwidth. However, with the EIS deadline now set for 2023, agencies are urged not to wait any longer before they initiate this crucial transition.

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