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# How to Craft a Well Written Contract Synopsis



# Why are we talking about Synopses?

- **A well crafted synopsis helps all parties to better understand the services provided under the subject contract**
- **A well crafted synopsis is critical for contracts approved under Article 72:**
  - **The synopsis will be reviewed by DOCPER, by US Dept of State, and by multiple agencies of the German government**
  - **The quality of the synopsis will help determine whether all parties agree that the contract approval should go forward**
  - **The synopsis becomes an important part of the NV that grants enterprise approval**
- **A poorly written synopsis will hinder progress toward approval and reflects badly upon the COR, DOCPER, and the US gov't more generally**



# What is a contract synopsis?

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- **A brief summary of the contract requirements**  
or
- **A layman's guide to what the contractor is expected to do under the terms of the contract**  
or
- **A fast and easy way for a person unfamiliar with the contract to learn about the services that will be provided under the contract**  
or
- **A quick way to verify whether the services provided under the contract are controversial in any way**



# A contract synopsis is not...

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- **A job description**  
**or**
- **A statement of work or a performance work statement**  
**or**
- **A resume for an applicant that will provide those services**



# Simple Rules for Great Synopses

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- A great synopsis always begins with “The contractor provides...”
- A great synopsis will not, shall not include the words “will” or “shall”
- A great synopsis is written entirely in the present tense
- A great synopsis will be free of jargon and undefined acronyms and is simple and easy to understand
- A great synopsis does not hide anything that might be found in the performance work statement
- A great synopsis includes consistent spellings and abbreviations; e.g. U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR)



# Example Synopsis #1

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**All-source analysis, and Socio-cultural dynamics/human terrain analysis, situational understanding, collection strategy and policy support, Publicly Available Information (PAI) expertise, and assuring information is shared with partners to meet operational goals. The contractor shall provide all personnel with the necessary expertise, equipment, planning development capabilities & tools, materials, supervision, and other items and services required to provide non-personal support services to SOCAFRICA.**



# Improved Synopsis #1

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**The contractor provides social media research and associated subject matter expertise specific to the African continent. These services include the review and analysis of publically available social media resources in order to identify developments, trends, indications, and warnings intended to increase situational awareness at the Special Operations Command - Africa. The contractor provides reports with insights and recommended cyber-countermeasures and courses of action. The contractor recommends new technologies and techniques to improve social media analysis.**



## Example Synopsis #2

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**The contractor will serve as a point of contact at U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) and other European organizations like North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), responsible for facilitating and managing interaction and coordination with military stakeholders. Contractor will assist Cubic Applications, Inc. in CBRN concept development, planning, execution and evaluation of workshops, exercises, and meetings. This may include event facilitation and logistical and administrative planning.**





## Improved Synopsis #2

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**The contractor provides research, recommendations, and liaison services associated with efforts to mitigate the threat and the impact of an emerging infectious disease outbreak, a biological attack, or a chemical weapons attack on the United States Forces or their allies. These services include the development, test, and evaluation of material and non-material solutions intended to mitigate the threat of an emerging infectious disease outbreak or a chemical incident. The contractor also provides recommendations regarding ways to improve the reporting and sharing of information before, during, and after an infectious disease outbreak, a chemical incident, or a biological incident.**

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# Conclusion

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- **The contract synopsis is the centerpiece of the contract approval package**
- **Well-crafted synopses facilitate smooth contract approvals and reflect credit on the US Forces in Germany**
- **The COR and the Vendor, since they know the required services better than DOCPER, should take the lead in the crafting of the contract synopsis**