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Complex Contracting

Government Purchasing in the Wake of the US Coast Guard's Deepwater Program

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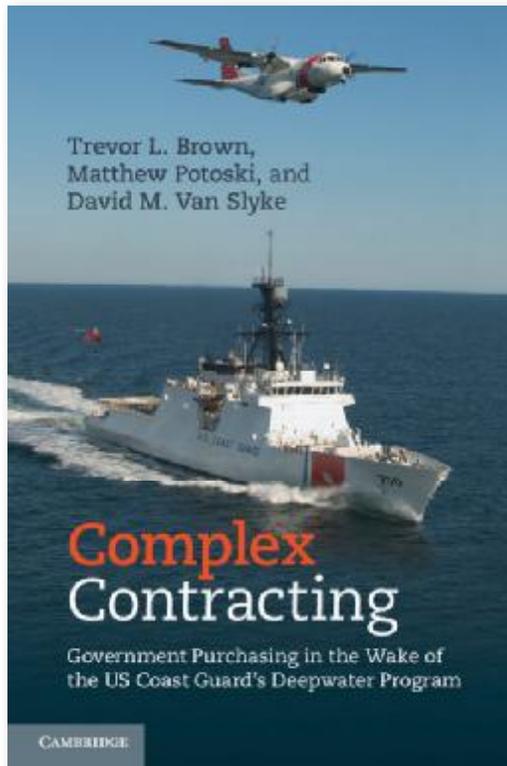
About the Book

Complex Contracting draws on core social science concepts to provide wide-ranging practical advice on how best to manage complex acquisitions. Using a strong analytical framework, the authors assess contract management practices, suggesting strategies for improvement and ways to avoid the pitfalls of managing contracts for large and sophisticated projects. An in-depth analysis of the US Coast Guard's Deepwater program is included to illustrate ways to respond to real-world contracting challenges. This high-profile and controversial case consisted of a projected 25-year, \$24 billion contract through which the US Coast Guard would buy a system of new boats, aircraft, communications, and control architecture to replace its aging fleet. The authors explore the reasons why this program, launched with such promise, turned out so poorly, and apply the lessons learned to similarly complex contracting scenarios. This engaging and accessible book has broad applicability and will appeal to policymakers, practitioners, scholars and students

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Praise for the Book

“With this work, Professors Brown, Potoski and Van Slyke have formulated an insightful view into the challenges and opportunities of complex contracting. The focus is on a large scale, complex acquisition program managed by a federal agency, but provides guidelines applicable to any program in the public or private sectors – particularly for those who seek to do business with or for the federal government and the necessity to get it right.”

– Sean O’Keefe, *Chief Executive, EADS North America; former NASA Administrator, Secretary of the Navy, Chancellor of Louisiana State University, and Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Defense.*

Key Features

- Deploys core social science concepts – collective action, governance, transaction costs – to offer practical advice on how best to manage contracts for complex projects
- Discusses the US Coast Guard’s Deepwater program, a vivid and engaging case which ended in a maelstrom of controversy, and applies the lessons learned to similarly complex contracting scenarios
- Written in an accessible style, making it suitable for a range of readers including policymakers, practitioners, scholars and students

Contents

Foreword Stan Soloway; 1. Introduction: the promise and perils of government contracting; 2. Managing complex contracting in theory and practice; 3. The Coast Guard’s Deepwater program; 4. Rules in complex contracts; 5. Performance incentives in complex contracts; 6. Complex contracting’s promise and pitfalls: win-win and lose-lose; 7. Management strategies for complex contracts; References; Index.

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