INFO ALERT

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NAVSEA Focuses on Management of Commercial Off-The-Shelf Technology

The use of Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) technology permits the application of newer technology at a faster pace and lower cost in our combat and weapons systems. At the same time, use of COTS technology has introduced additional risks and complexities into long established business, technical, and support practices for fielding these systems. To address these issues, the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) chartered a cross-functional COTS Steering Board (CSB) to develop COTS policy and prepare a COTS Handbook to aid program managers and acquisition personnel.

The resulting NAVSEA Policy, NAVSEA Instruction 9083.1, Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) Policy, describes the actions required in planning and implementing COTS within NAVSEA systems. The central theme of the policy is the need to plan and budget for the impact COTS has on established processes. These plans and budets form a COTS management strategy that is documented and communicated throughout the program. Figure 1 provides an overview of the suggested approach to COTS management. Figure 2 illustrates the process for considering COTS solutions early in the acquisition process.

The NAVSEA COTS/Non-Developmental Items (NDI) Handbook provides details on the impact of COTS on areas ranging from configuration management to systems e ngineering. The handbook defines the issues and the factors that must be addressed when implementing COTS-based solutions. Acquisition and support personnel must tailor the COTS guidance to their programs based on mission and the phase of the life cycle.

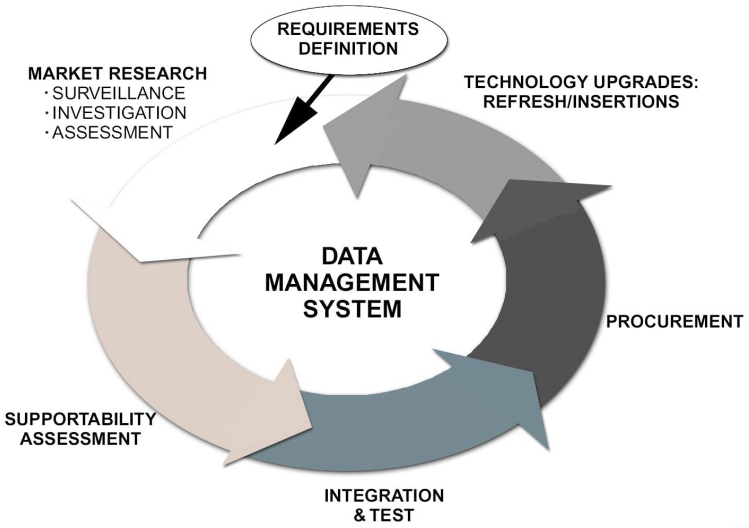

Figure 1. COTS/NDI Systems Engineering Process

See page 2

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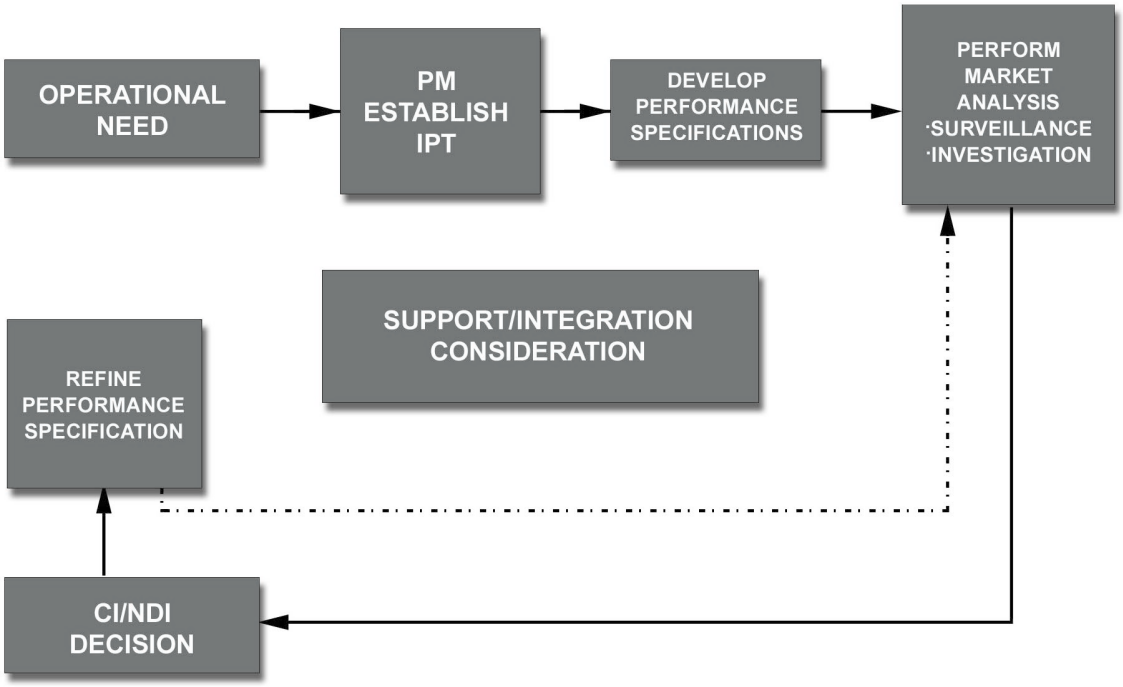

Figure 2. COTS/NDI Decision Process

The CSB also established a COTS web site (http:// cots.navsea.navy.mil) to share the lessons learned and other relevant information regarding COTS. The web site provides links to the NAVSEA COTS Policy and Guidance described in this Info Alert as well as other COTS–related activities.

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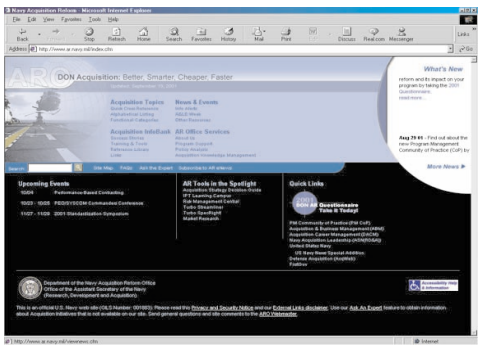

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