

National Advisory Committee on Systems Engineering

Summary Report by WSBardo Chairman

The core team of the Systems Engineering Working Party had functioned as an informal NAC before its formal establishment. Principal activities were:

[1] Discussions with MOD[Deputy Chiefs Defence Staff] on the application of systems engineering principles to Smart Procurement. There was a formal conference following the publication of the report Building Integrated Systems that adopted its recommendations and included them within the DCDS recommendations.

[2] Discussions with EPSRC on the implementation of recommendations for university/industry collaboration on systems engineering research and postgraduate courses.

The Systems Integration Initiative was later launched and a number of large programmes is under way. Postgraduate course were also supported.

Following the formal establishment of the NAC a number of planning sessions was held, including a meeting with Sir Robert May, following his keynote address to the INCOSE International Conference at Brighton 1999. He expressed a wish for Foresight to be used to extend the systems engineering approach to other sectors of the economy.

We viewed the two priorities to be unchanged, viz. supporting the Smart Procurement initiative, and supporting the EPSRC SII.

It was agreed by the Defence Procurement Agency that the NAC would be a suitable body to provide the guides on systems engineering for the Acquisition Management System. We formed a working party under Peter Brook [DERA Malvern] to progress this. Peter has since assumed the role of Integration Authority in the Support organisation at Abbey Wood. They have held three meetings [latest 30th June].

Now that some SII programmes have been established I will propose a meeting with EPSRC to review progress. It is clear that there are some structural problems. I know that some heads of the department are concerned that the formation of multidisciplinary teams will reduce the rate of paper publication and adversely affect their performance ratings in the Research Assessment Exercise.

I have taken the view that in order to avoid having an unduly large body with standing representatives we should ask committee members to request agreement from institutions and trade bodies that some of us could be double or triple -hatted to represent a number of bodies and to hold a seminar with a larger representation once a year to ensure views can be exchanged on a wider basis.

In the Autumn it will be appropriate to forge closer links with closely related NACs, such as synthetic environments and human factors [already cross-represented on the NAC].

