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The Honorable Michael Duffey
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1010

Subj: Recommended Best Practices for the Use of Digital Engineering Tools, Revised

Dear Hon. USD (A&S) Michael Duffey:

This letter augments the letter dated December 25, 2025, Subj: Recommended Best Practices for the Use of Digital Engineering Tools. It cites the revised white paper, *Integrating the Embedded Software Path, Model-Based Systems Engineering (SE), MOSA, and Digital Engineering (DE) with Program Management*," 2/22/26. The white paper was revised to incorporate additional information regarding the digital thread from the NDIA Systems Engineering (SE) Division report, *IEEE 15288 Meets Lean Agile*.

The white paper includes the following additional information from the NDIA SE Division report:

Make data-driven decisions:

1. Utilize data and analytics to inform decision-making at all levels of the organization. Collect, analyze, and act on data to...ensure decisions are based on objective evidence rather than intuition or assumptions. Capture traceability across the digital thread to provide insight into the current state of the system and to provide real-time data for improved decision-making.
2. By leveraging real-time data and traceability across the digital thread, engineers can monitor system performance, identify issues early.
3. Use cases and scenarios form the foundation of the digital thread, providing traceable links across the system lifecycle and serving as the basis for test case development.

As a reminder, the white paper already incorporated the following information from the NDIA SE Division report:

Continuous Verification and Validation:

- Embed verification and validation activities into the development process to detect defects early, reduce rework, and ensure the system meets stakeholder expectations. Use MBSE, a digital infrastructure, and digital twins to support early and continuous Verification and Validation.
- Agile practices such as feature and story mapping can assist in understanding and facilitating iterative exploration of needed functionality demonstrated in the models, enabling quick feedback loops and improved validation. Requirements definition works well with defining the features and stories. Features and stories convey what user or system functionality is needed and includes demonstrable acceptance criteria, clearly articulating what done looks like.

If the NDIA Earned Value Management (EVM) System Standard SAE/EIA 748 is not cancelled, then the SE Division should collaborate with the NDIA Integrated Program Management Div. to salvage that business management standard. EIA-748 is silent on engineering best practices and the product scope. Of course, there should be no DFARS requirement for EVM or any project management standard.

Please advise each Secretary of a military department to consider the best practices for the use of DE tools in the revised white paper when developing their best practices for the use of DE tools and recommendations for improvement.

Yours truly,



Paul Solomon

CC:

Hon. Adam Smith, HASC

Hon. SecAF Meink

Hon. Roger Wicker, SASC

Hon. Russell Vought, Director, OMB

Hon. SECNAV John Phelan

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