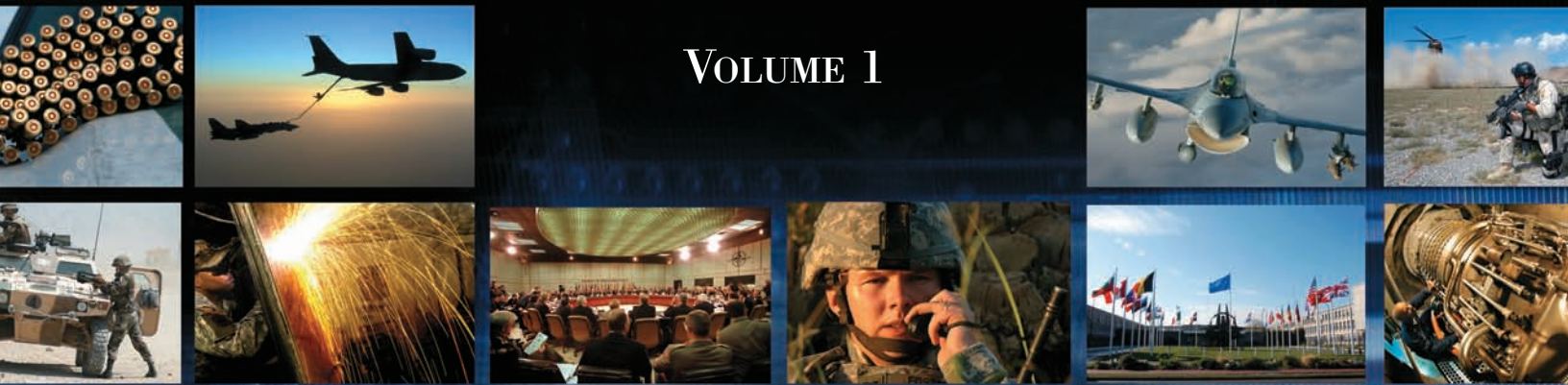# DoD Participation in NATO NSA/NCS Working Groups

Volume 1

Defense Standardization Program Office
International Cooperation Planning and Analysis Office

NATO
OTAN

NATO
Standardization Agency

NSA

Foreword

Data used for this task were obtained from the NSA protected website (https://nsa.nato.int/protected), which requires an approved user account and password protection measures, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization public website (http://www.nato.int).

RELEASE

This document has been determined to be appropriate for public release.

To obtain copies of the DoD Participation in NATO NSA/NCS Working Groups study report in its entirety or make comments, please contact:

Defense Standardization Program Office (DSPO)

(703)-767-6872

http://www.dsp.dla.mil

DoD Participation in NATO NSA/NCS Working Groups
Volume 1: Executive Report

FEBRUARY 2007

Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) supports the participation of DoD repre-
sentatives in the development of NATO Standardization Agreements (STANAGs)
within the various NATO Standardization Agency (NSA) boards and their subor-
dinate working groups (WGs). However, the authorization and funding that en-
ables each representative to participate in the process come from each individual's
chain of command. DoD has no mechanisms for central accounting or manage-
ment of these funds and, therefore, has an inadequate understanding of the size
and application of those resources. DoD also does not fully understand how the
organization, staffing, and management of standardization activities affect the ef-
ficiency and effectiveness of NSA standardization operations.

Because NATO is expanding its membership and the need for transformation is
under consideration, the time is right for DoD to assess its participation in the
NSA standardization process and ensure that it is applying its scarce resources
efficiently and effectively to maximize the return on its investment. Therefore, the
Defense Standardization Program Office and the DoD International Cooperation
Planning and Analysis Office undertook a study of the nature and dynamics of
U.S. participation in the NSA and the NATO Committee of Standardization
(NCS) activities. The study had nine objectives:

◆ Objective 1—describe the structure and operations of NSA and Military
  Committee standardization boards

◆ Objective 2—identify the policies that govern or relate to DoD participa-
  tion in NSA/NCS

◆ Objective 3—determine how personnel are assigned to work on the stan-
  dardization bodies

◆ Objective 4—assess DoD participation in the standardization bodies

- Objective 5—identify the DoD participants' parent organizations and contact information

- Objective 6—determine how DoD participation in NSA and NCS standardization is funded

- Objective 7—identify the documents generated by the NSA and NCS standardization bodies

- Objective 8—identify other participating nations and assess their ratification of documents

- Objective 9—assess, qualitatively, the value and effectiveness of DoD participation.

Specific study conclusions and recommendations are associated with each of these objectives.

Structure and Operations

The current NSA structure and operations are logical and functioning reasonably well. Although the boards employ different numbers of WGs and different structures of WG subordinate units, the data (presented in subsequent chapters) do not indicate any significant differences in terms of productivity, quality, efficiency, or effectiveness. Under the current rules, each WG has the flexibility to expand or contract its subordinate structures to address its unique requirements. The differences between the various WGs result from their varying needs and management strategies. Removing the flexibility the WG currently have would likely prove counterproductive. However, a periodic review of subordinate units could promote lean structures.

Boards and WGs with multiple subordinate organizations are able to process standardization documents in parallel and theoretically accomplish substantial standardization work in a given time period. This is evident in the total number of documents owned and managed by each board or WG. Those with more documents tend to have deeper structures. One risk of moving to flatter structures is the loss of parallel processing capacity and lost productivity potential. This risk could be mitigated, to considerable degree, by increasing the use of virtual collaboration tools.

Significant opportunities exist for improving jointness and efficiency through reorganization and integration along the lines presented in the proposal for transforming NATO military operational standardization.[1] The proposal recognizes the skills and disciplines of the single Service boards, but offers a more streamlined and coherent standardization structure to improve coalition operations.

---

[1] NATO Standardization Agency, "NSA Transformation Vision" (information briefing to the NATO Committee for Standardization, NATO HQ, Brussels, September 12, 2006).

Recommendations about the structure and operations of the standardization boards are as follows:

- Each WG should annually review its structure to determine which subordinate elements are still required and which should be refocused. The strategy should be to keep the overall structure as lean and efficient as possible.

- DoD should monitor and support the NSA transformation proposal. This proposal has merit, but must also be coupled with approaches that support WG structural flexibility and provide support to ensure solid staffing of the range of issues a WG must work on in a given time frame.

- NSA should establish a system of performance metrics by which productivity, quality, efficiency, and effectiveness can be appropriately measured.

- NSA should institute a continuous improvement process that includes an annual review and evaluation cycle for each WG and subordinate unit.

- NSA should promote better integration and broader use of virtual collaboration tools.

Policies

U.S. participation, in general, is in compliance with the policies as written. If the NSA proposal for transforming the NATO military standardization board structure is approved and endorsed by the North Atlantic Council, policy documents will have to be amended accordingly to support the new structure.

Recommendations are as follows:

- DoD should closely monitor the progress of the proposal through the Military Committee and be prepared to modify or update any of the above policy and guidance documents as appropriate to support this new structure.

- Organizations and individuals responsible for maintaining and updating the various policy documents should monitor the progress of the NSA Proposal and determine whether changes may be required as a result of any transformational changes.

- The Joint Staff should expand and improve CJCSI 2700.01B to reflect any changes that result from NSA transformation. In addition, the document should provide more detailed guidance to the military departments and agencies.

Assignment of DoD Participants

Heads of delegations are selected and appointed in accordance with CJCSI 2700.01B and the policies established by the Services in accordance with the Joint instruction guidance. The Services support the WGs by providing delegates and technical experts (TEs).

DoD does not appear to have an accurate list of DoD personnel participating in NATO standardization activities. Policies relating to the maintenance of such a list are not adequately enforced.

Recommendations concerning the assignment of DoD personnel are as follows:

- ◆ DoD should create and maintain a complete and accurate master register of all DoD participants in the NATO standardization process. This list should be reviewed and validated periodically.

- ◆ DoD should review and update appropriate policies and enforce those policies to ensure that an accurate master register of participants is properly managed and readily available.

Level of DoD Participation

In general, the level of DoD participation on the five Boards and their subordinate units is neither excessive nor unreasonable. Only a very small number of WGs or their subordinate units appear to be potentially out of the norm as compared to the others. These differences may be due to data anomalies or to differences in the breadth and complexities of the work.

The use of subordinate units by a number of WGs is appropriate to facilitate processing large numbers of standardization initiatives in parallel. To put it another way, consolidating the work of the WGs into fewer units would be unwise without evidence that it would have superior results and without superior technology to enable parallel processing. What appears to be excessive DoD participation can be attributed to the U.S. custodianship of a large percentage of standardization documents and the use of technical experts.

Custodianship for a standardization document involves additional work beyond that required of nations that do *not* have custodianship. This helps explain, and justify, the higher levels of DoD participation in some standardization bodies. DoD participation in the various WGs appears proportional to its document custodial responsibilities, as does the representation of other nations. Furthermore, analysis of staffing levels, when compared to the volumes of documents supported, indicated that most units operate relatively efficiently. The data show that assigning 8 to 12 documents per group and about 4 documents per person is optimal.

Each standardization body is set up to address a unique technical topic. Technical experts are needed only when the topic of their expertise is being debated. The use of the subordinate bodies optimizes the productive time of the participating experts by limiting the discussion to topics for which the TEs can bring their expertise to bear. In contrast, consolidation could cause queuing of individual technical topics for discussion time on the WG agenda rather than being processed in parallel in the subordinate units. Having a series of topics planned for discussion on a WG agenda might require many TEs to be available for only the short periods when their topics come up for discussion. TEs may need to travel a considerable distance in order to attend the meeting driving up travel costs. In addition, waiting for their turn on the agenda would be inefficient and an unnecessary waste of important resources. Generally, TEs are not interchangeable; therefore, parallel processing would appear to be the most efficient approach. Military and civilian leads also bring unique subject matter knowledge to the table. The argument for TEs should also apply to the leads.

The few WGs and subordinate units that are out of the norm, in terms of number of DoD participants, may warrant additional analysis, particularly of their staffing practices. The units for which the collected data indicate high levels of participation have been flagged and subsequent inquiry can easily resolve the questions.

The NSA should retain its flexibility to use subordinate groups where that approach contributes to more efficient processing of the standardization workload. In addition, boards or WGs should seek to divide workload in a way that helps optimize efficiency and effectiveness. The need for some subordinate units might be offset by greater reliance on virtual collaboration tools. In addition, some improvements should be possible along the lines proposed in the Transformation Vision and in a few other areas. These include the following:

◆ Increase the use of technology to support virtual meetings and coordination

◆ Improve data management with the NATO Standardization Document Database (NSDD) framework

◆ Increase standardization across boards, WGs, panels, teams, and syndicates in recording and maintaining participation information

◆ Increase standardization in meeting documentation to accurately reflect meeting processes and results.

Participant Information

Data accuracy is a significant problem that must be addressed to improve the ability of the DoD to understand, track, and manage U.S. participation in NSA standardization activities.

The lack of adequate or accurate data on the NSA websites may be a consequence of frequent personnel changes and of inadequate tools to properly track participation. The lack of consistency across the various standardization bodies and the inadequacy of vehicles to consolidate participant data into a single accurate data source points to an urgent need for standardization and improvement in terms of data collection and records management.

The study team's recommendations are as follows:

- ◆ DoD should provide clear guidance requiring accurate recording of all participants at every meeting or official standardization activity.

- ◆ DoD should establish a single centralized database for tracking participation and for recording participant data.

- ◆ DoD should monitor and enforce requirements to capture and record participant data.

- ◆ Group secretaries should capture attendance data at every meeting and post this information to a master roster.

- ◆ Individual participants should be made responsible for periodically checking and validating the accuracy of their personal data.

Funding

Participants fund their attendance at international meetings from their operations and maintenance budgets per Joint and Service regulations. Individual organizations program and fund their participation at the NATO meetings in accordance with their own policy guidance. Funding organizations program and provide such funding based on deliberate decisions that such representation is justified and of sufficient value to be continued.

The NATO financial cost share figures appear to track closely with the custodianship of documents and personnel support figures to the respective board structures (e.g., 84 percent of custodial responsibilities fall to the top 6 nations: United States, Great Britain, Germany, Canada, Netherlands. and France).

The following are the study team's funding recommendations:

- ◆ DoD should provide guidance for overall U.S. participation in NATO standardization activities and the related costs. Under the present funding policies and structures, this information is not available. However, if the appropriate policies and tools are put in place, then the information could be collected and maintained.

◆ DoD should require participants to provide funding source information that could be made part of the participants database (master roster) recommended earlier.

◆ Participants should periodically update their personal funding source data and to keep an appropriate record of their participation and the related costs.

◆ If capturing such data is required by policy, then those within DoD who have responsibilities to manage overall participation must develop appropriate plans and strategies for using the information in a manner that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of DoD participation in the NSA standardization process.

Documents Generated

Information in the NSDD is generally accurate and current, but a fair number of errors and omissions are evident. These hamper the ability of users to effectively work with the information. Conclusions and recommendations based on the analyses have a limited shelf life and need timely consideration for appropriate integration into the NSA Transformation Initiatives.

Some nations have a high number of "No Response" entries against promulgated documents. Ratification by all member nations is a worthy goal, even after a document has been promulgated. The NSA document ratification process lacks a sufficiently robust mechanism to motivate those nations with "No Response" entries to add their ratification response to the document.

Changes are needed that will help accelerate or improve the document development and ratification process.

The study team's general recommendations about the documents generated are as follows:

◆ Initiate a focused effort to improve database accuracy, improve participant attendance records, and eliminate documents from the active files when they have been superseded. Efforts should include populating blank or missing data fields (e.g., custodianship) and cross-checking accuracy with data posted on electronic websites. These efforts should be accomplished as part of the transformation strategy.

◆ Tailor user interfaces to better facilitate the NATO members or researchers in accurately finding documents and evaluating document data.

◆ Consider the value of obtaining wider ratification for promulgated documents, and if appropriate, create a more robust ratification process to be

integrated with the other related changes contained in the NSA transformation process.

- ◆ Reduce the number and size of documents.

- ◆ Develop strategies and approaches to reduce the number of documents as well as the size of the documents.

  - ➤ Focus on interoperability; if a document does not enhance interoperability or operational concepts, then consider cancelling the STANAG.

  - ➤ Reduce the content within STANAGs requiring ratification. Document sections containing factual information such as the number of transport aircraft a nation operates or a specific national checklist should not be part of a ratification process. Instead, ratification review should focus on the elements that affect interoperability or operations (such as the flow of events, tactics, techniques, and procedures). Sections that should be part of the ratification process should be identified.

  - ➤ Adopt civil standards where possible. Review STANAGs to determine which are covered by and might be replaced by international standards.

  - ➤ Create a civil standards index. In those instances where a civilian standard may be suitable to implement a NATO requirement, create a streamlined adoption process that dramatically shortens ratification time.

  - ➤ When existing STANAGs are periodically reviewed for renewal, require an assessment of the documents relevance and importance and cancel those that fail the test.

  - ➤ Freeze mature and "obsolete technology" documents where little further advance is anticipated. Extend the review cycle for these documents to minimize or eliminate the automatic review process after a fixed period of time. Review these documents only if valid arguments are raised to do so.

- ◆ Accelerate the ratification process.

  - ➤ Educate nations and WG and panel members on the ratification process with regular NSA presentations.

  - ➤ Consider ratifying documents using a "silence" procedure. This constitutes a radical departure from the current process. Under a "silence" procedure, a document would be promulgated after a predetermined period unless there is a break of silence by a nation.

➤ Reduce the number of ratifying nations. Once a "validation proposal" goes out to nations and initiates the development of a document, then require only those nations that participate in the development to ratify a document prior to promulgation.

◆ Reduce the delay to implementation.

➤ Allow an interim implementation process for a ratification draft when the NATO command structure determines the need is urgent. This would enable early implementation action on documents for which eventual ratification is a near certainty.

➤ Consider implementing documents using the "silence procedure." If no "show stoppers "surface within a specified period within the ratification process, permit initiation of the implementation process. If silence is not broken, the assumption can be made that there will be no major issues to preclude implementation. This approach could accelerate moving new or improved doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures to the warfighters sooner to improve operational effectiveness.

Participation by Other Nations

A perception exists that products produced by panels comprised of just a few large nations lack widespread acceptance by non-participating nations and therefore most non-participating fail to ratify. Our examination of ratification patterns for 7 smaller nations did not support this perception.

The percentage of participation on these panels closely parallels the percentage of national custodianship of documents. Delegate numbers appear to be consistent with panel responsibilities and ownership. In addition, because the two official languages of NATO are English and French, document custodianship tends to favor those nations whose native language is English (United States, Great Britain and Canada), or French (France, Belgium, Canada and Luxembourg).

Products produced by panels comprised of a few nations receive respectable acceptance and ratifying responses from large and small Alliance members alike. If a systemic lack of acceptance were present, one would expect a much higher percentage of Not Ratifying or Not Participating responses. This was not the case.

The study recommends that NSA continue to encourage all nations to actively participate in the development and ratification of agreements where resources permit. If and where a merger of panels or teams into a parent WGs would be practical and clearly enable wider participation, with no loss of productivity, then such changes should be encouraged.

Value and Effectiveness of DoD Participation

There is clearly great value in the NSA standardization process and in robust DoD participation. As the largest and most powerful nation in the Alliance, the United States has more than most to offer, more than most to defend, and more than most to gain. The levels of participation we observed appear balanced and in keeping with the U.S. roles and responsibilities.

The study found that DoD participation is effective. In our interviews with the participant, there was consensus that the process was effective, but that considerable improvements are needed.

The study recommends that DoD do the following:

- Support and build on the transformation proposal to achieve meaningful improvements in system performance

- Support the application and use of new technologies to support the document development, ratification, promulgation, implementation processes

- Develop a process improvement strategy with metrics to drive and track the needed improvements

- Support the Civil Standards Management WG to enhance cooperation and coordination with civil standards bodies

- Continue a robust level of DoD participation in NATO standardization and create effective mechanisms to track and measure DoD participation.