



ACQUISITION  
AND SUSTAINMENT

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3010 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

APR 16 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
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UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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DIRECTOR OF NET ASSESSMENT  
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES  
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SUBJECT: Middle Tier of Acquisition (Rapid Prototyping/Rapid Fielding) Interim Authority  
and Guidance

**1. Description.** Section 804 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92), provides authority to the Department of Defense (DoD) to rapidly prototype and/or rapidly field capabilities under a new pathway, distinct from the traditional acquisition system. Under the Middle Tier of Acquisition, programs subject to the guidance shall not be subject to the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System (JCIDS) manual and DoD Directive 5000.01, "The Defense Acquisition System," except to the extent specifically provided in the implementing guidance. This memo has been coordinated with the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

**2. Interim Authority**

**2.1.** This memo provides to DoD Components the authority to implement Section 804 on an interim basis until September 30, 2019. This time period may be extended at the discretion of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)). DoD Components are encouraged to immediately further implement the Section 804 authority by developing rapid prototype and fielding processes and procedures.

**2.2.** The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (OUSD(A&S)) will commence a collaborative policy development effort no later than January 2019. This approach will allow DoD Components to provide input based on their prototype process and procedures, analysis, and lessons learned into policy and guidance for implementing Section 804 authorities. Such policy and guidance will be finalized prior to the expiration of this interim authority.

### **3. Implementation**

**3.1.** Subject to the provisions of Section 804, organizations utilizing this authority are authorized to initiate Middle Tier of Acquisition Rapid Prototyping programs with the objective to field a prototype that can be demonstrated in an operational environment and provide for a residual operational capability within five years of the development of an approved requirement, and Middle Tier of Acquisition Rapid Fielding programs that shall begin production within six months and complete fielding within five years of an approved requirement. The DoD Components will determine what constitutes an approved requirement or may leverage an existing requirement.

**3.2.** The Component Acquisition Executives (CAEs) are accountable for the management and delegation of this authority as appropriate. Organizations utilizing this authority will issue appropriate procedures for Middle Tier of Acquisition efforts to adhere to the following:

**A. Rapid prototyping:**

(1) a merit-based process for the consideration of innovative technologies and new capabilities to meet needs communicated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Combatant Commanders;

(2) a process for developing and implementing acquisition and funding strategies for the program;

(3) a process for demonstrating and evaluating the performance of fieldable prototypes developed pursuant to the program in an operational environment; and

(4) a process for transitioning successful prototypes to new or existing acquisition programs for production and fielding under the rapid fielding pathway or the traditional acquisition system.

**B. Rapid fielding:**

(1) a merit-based process for the consideration of existing products and proven technologies to meet needs communicated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Combatant Commanders;

(2) a process for demonstrating performance and evaluating for current operational purposes the proposed products and technologies;

(3) a process for developing and implementing acquisition and funding strategies for the program;

(4) a process for considering lifecycle costs and addressing issues of logistics support and system interoperability; and

(5) a process for identifying and exploiting opportunities to use the rapid fielding pathway to reduce total ownership costs.

**4. Rapid Prototyping Fund.** While using this interim authority, organizations must make use of their existing funding consistent with the purpose for which the funds were appropriated. This interim authority does not cover the establishment of the Rapid Prototyping Fund. The Rapid Prototyping Fund will be authorized when approved by the organizations responsible for those authorities.

**5. Data.**

**5.1.** Organizations utilizing this interim authority must also identify data that can be shared across the Department via an open and collaborative Department-managed tool under the final guidance. This data must include, but not be limited to: name of program, capability gap or problem, definitive source for the capability gap or problem, capability characteristic or solution, date funds approved for initiation, funding source, program result (transition or termination), date of transition or termination, reason for transition or termination, program budget, and vendor name(s).

**5.2.** The CAE, for organizations utilizing this authority, is responsible for capturing and storing the above data. This data will be provided during the collaborative policy development effort discussed above.

**6. Education and Training Needs.** Organizations utilizing this interim authority should also identify any additional education and training needs required to best utilize the Middle Tier of Acquisition responsibly and as a matter of regular acquisition practice. This information will be used to develop necessary curricula and programs at the Defense Acquisition University.

**7. Related Changes to Existing Policy.** Organizations utilizing this interim authority should also identify changes required of existing acquisition policy, to include DoD Instruction 5000.02, or statutes to allow programs executed through the Middle Tier of Acquisition to address statutory requirements that add little or no value to the management of the program. This data will be provided during the collaborative policy development effort discussed above.



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