



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC**

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MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION A AND B
ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU

FROM: HQ USAF/A5/7
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

SUBJECT: Interim Air Force Guidance for Requirements Process

References: (a) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 20 August 2025, *Reform the Joint Requirements Process to Accelerate Fielding of Warfighting Capability*
(b) Secretary of the Air Force Memorandum, *Organizational Alignment to Accelerate Airpower for Warfighters*, 9 Oct 2025.
(c) CJCSM 5123.01, *Manual for the Joint Requirements Oversight Council and the Joint Force Requirements Process*, 15 Jan 2026.
(d) Secretary of the Air Force Memorandum, *Requirements Reform Action Plan*, Approval Pending 2026.

1. PURPOSE: This memorandum provides interim guidance on the Air Force's new Requirements Process until AFD 10-6, AFI 10-601 and A5/7 Capability Development Guidebooks are completed. This guidance is a result of the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force's Action Plan to reform the Requirements Process, replacing the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) with a more agile and collaborative framework.

2. GOVERNANCE: The new governance structure is designed to integrate the requirements, acquisition, and resourcing enterprises, ensuring alignment from strategy to fielding. Effective immediately, the governance structure is:

a. Capability Development Council (CDC): The CDC replaces the Air Force Requirements Oversight Council (AFROC) as the senior-most body for capability planning and execution review. Chaired at the Secretary, Chief, or Vice Chief of the Air Force level, the CDC will provide strategic guidance or decision and will be the senior most forum for adjudicating Capability Development issues that cannot be resolved at lower levels.

b. Capability Portfolio Management Board (CPMB): The CPMB is the GO/SES-level forum chaired by the AF Chief Modernization Officer (CMO) (or designee, typically the A5/7C) which oversees the capability planning process. Its responsibilities include reviewing, endorsing and/or approving requirements artifacts such as Mission Needs Statements (MNSs), System Attribute Requirements Documents (SARDs), Emergent Operational Needs (EONs), Portfolio Modernization Plans (PMPs), Software Capability Needs Statements (SW-CNSs), 1067s, and DOTMLPF Change Recommendations (DCRs), and will designate Lead Commands/Agents when the updated AFD 10-6 is approved.

c. Electronic CPMB (eCPMB): The eCPMB replaces the electronic AFROC (eAFROC) staffing process. The new process will be similar to the eAFROC but with added emphasis on faster staffing review and endorsement timelines to speed validation decisions. Contentious issues identified in eCPMB may drive a live CPMB.

3. REQUIREMENTS PROCESSES & ARTIFACTS: The new process moves away from pre-conceived solutions to defining operational problems and mission outcomes. Format examples of the new requirements artifacts can be requested from the Air Force Gatekeeper (AF/A5/7CR) and will be included as part of the AF A5/7 Capability Development Guidebook re-write. Effective Immediately:

a. The MNS provides a "bottom-up" pathway for sponsors to identify threat-informed operational problems that fall outside of the top-down Force Design Guidance. If a sponsor believes a non-aligned capability should be pursued, they must submit a Modernization Request to the gatekeeper with supporting analysis for consideration.

(1) Process: Requirements sponsors will submit a Modernization Request to the AF/A5/7 Requirements Gatekeeper before beginning further MNS work. The Gatekeeper will staff the request to applicable agencies and forward to CMO for approval determination before conducting further analysis in support of an MNS submission.

(2) Capability Based Assessments (CBA) are not required as part of a SARD, however a summary of similar analysis should be included in the Modernization Request, justifying the operational need. If the MNS is approved, the CBA-like analysis will be incorporated into PMP development.

(3) Sponsors will submit their MNS to the AF Gatekeeper for eCPMB review and endorsement for CMO approval.

b. The SARD replaces the legacy Capability Development Document (CDD), Rapid Prototyping Requirements Document (RFPD), and Rapid Fielding Requirements Document (RFRD). The SARD focuses on identifying the performance attributes necessary to meet the operational gaps, to include Minimum Viable Attributes (MVAs) desired in an initial capability delivery, providing a flexible starting point for iterative development.

(1) Process: The assigned Lead Command/Agent in collaboration with the Capability Portfolio Team (CPT) will draft the SARD and submit it to the AF/A5/7 Requirements Gatekeeper for review and staffing. Upon completion, a SARD will go through eCPMB before validation by A5/7C, or higher as needed.

(2) Alignment: Capability Portfolio Teams (CPTs) will begin building Portfolio Management Plans (PMPs) in alignment with the Force Design Narrative and annual Force Design Guidance. While PMPs are in development, sponsors and lead agents must ensure capabilities requested via SARD align with the current Force Design Narrative and annual Force Design Guidance (FDG). For capabilities which are outside the FDG, sponsors and lead agents can use the MNS process.

(3) CPTs will be comprised of AF A5/7 functional teams, corresponding SAF/AQ, A8 and MAJCOM teams. Each organization must participate, collaborate and produce PMPs and subsequent SARDs based on supporting analysis.

- c. The Solution Pathway Review (SPR) will no longer be used. Collaboration and coordination within CPTs will replace the SPR's discussion or direction on acquisition strategy and corresponding requirements documentation.
- d. Until further guidance, continue submitting 1067 as needed. Updates to the Modification Request process will be included as part of the AFI 10-601 re-write and publication.
- e. The SW-CNS process will remain the same.
- f. The DCR process will remain the same.
- g. Effective immediately, the Urgent Operational Needs (UON) process is discontinued, and piloting is established for the new Immediate/Imminent Operational Needs (ICON) and Emerging Operational Needs (EON) processes, as follows:
 - (1) Immediate/Imminent Combat Operational Need (ICON): ICONs are reserved exclusively for the highest-level capability needs and are used to request rapid fielding of capabilities to mitigate capability gaps with severe mission consequences or loss/risk to life. ICONs will be submitted to the A5/7CR Gatekeeper.
 - (a) Imminent is defined by, "Prepare to Deploy Order" (PTDO), deployment order (DEPOD), or execution order (EXORD) and/or Intelligence reporting or demonstrated intent where temporal proximity of threat/forward movement is within 60 to 90 days (not associated with an exercise).
 - (b) Immediate is defined as a current combat operation, forces under attack, or consequence of natural disaster.
 - (2) An ICON must meet the following criteria for consideration:
 - (a) Immediate Severe Consequence: A confirmed immediate need where failure to act will result in certain death and/or unacceptable risk to a primary objective of imminent or ongoing operations.
 - (b) Non-existent Capability: There is not a current capability across the DOTMLPF-P or DoW inventory to support the gap.
 - (c) Rapid Timeline: Initial capability of solutions requiring minimal integration should be delivered within 6 months. Initial capability of solutions requiring greater integration should be delivered within 12 months or less. Full capability is required within 18 months for all ICONs. NOTE: A minimum of Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 7 is necessary for potential capabilities to meet a gap but the JFACC may waive the operational test requirements to a TRL 6 to expedite fielding.
 - (d) Warfighter Origin: The ICON must originate from the warfighter in the applicable Numbered Air Force (i.e. AFCENT, AFSOUTH, AFNORTH, AFSPACE) supporting the specific geographic Combatant Command in immediate or imminent operation(s).
 - (e) AOR-limited: ICON requirement is limited to a specific AOR's immediate needs only, not fleet-wide.

(3) ICONs will be reviewed/approved by A5/7C or elevated to the CMO as needed.

(4) If the Assessment of Operational Utility (AOU) determines the UON solution is successful, the decision to sustain in that AOR and/or to validate the requirement for additional AORs or fleetwide fielding will be made as part of PMPs and Force Modernization/POM cycle input at 12 months or at termination of need.

NOTE: ICONs are not intended to not to address enterprise-wide gaps, but only to meet the specific criteria listed above.

(5) Emerging Operational Needs (EON): Where there is new information or change to the operational environment, the EON pathway allows sponsors to request a reassessment of previous POM decisions and budget priorities based on one or more of the following conditions:

- (a) Change in the operational environment (e.g. new threats)
- (b) New technological opportunities
- (c) New Concept of Operations (CONOP) or Concept of Employment (CONEMP),
- (d) More effective (cost/capability) solution not previously considered in POM deliberations.
- (e) Change in Operation / OPLAN.

(6) Validation of criteria for an EON are as follows:

- (a) Adequate intelligence analysis for new threats must be provided (on the specific affected AORs, as applicable) from or validated by AF A2 / Intelligence Community.
- (b) Sponsor must provide a reprioritized gap list with the requested new capability included and prioritized against other gaps. This may mean resourced items will become potential offsets to fund the new higher priority capability requirement.
- (c) EON requests are signed by the MAJCOM/Lead Agency Commander and submitted to the AF A5/7CR Gatekeeper for eCPMB review and endorsement for CMO approval.
- (d) EON requests will be reviewed by CPTs for consideration for incorporation into the applicable PMP.

4. DOCUMENT STAFFING: The staffing process is as follows:

- a. The Lead Command/Agent, in coordination with the AF/A5/7C Capability Portfolio Team (CPT), will lead a Capability Planning Enterprise-wide writing team to draft the appropriate requirements artifact (e.g., MNS, DCR, SARD, SW-CNS, etc.).
- b. Requirements artifacts are submitted to the AF Requirements Gatekeeper for initial review.
- c. The AFGK will submit for eCPMB (or select organizations, as appropriate) review and endorsement recommendation. Requirements Sponsors will adjudicate comments as required with the commenting organization.

d. Following adjudication, artifacts will be staffed for Requirements Decision Authority approval and validation.

5. LEGACY PROCESSES, DOCUMENTS & TRANSITION: Effective immediately, requirements sponsors will cease drafting new requirements artifacts using the legacy JCIDS formats (ICD, AoAs, CDD, RPRD, RFRD, UONs), and will instead use the requirements artifacts described in Section 3 of this Memorandum.

a. Legacy artifacts (CBAs, ICDs, AoAs, CDDs, RPRDs, RFRDs, UONs) currently in progress for formal coordination and staffing may continue through to completion of review and validation.

b. Updates of previously validated CDDs may continue to use the CDD Update process or can transition to the use of a SARD for post-Milestone C requirements updates.

c. CBA and AoA analysis activities currently in progress will coordinate with the applicable A5/7C CPT lead, to determine appropriate artifacts for validation.

NOTE: The AoA process (Study Plan, Study Guide, Final Report) is still required by law for Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAP) programs.

6. MANDATORY PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES: Requirements artifacts sponsors will continue to address the Performance Attributes previously mandated by JCIDS (Force Protection, System Survivability, Sustainment, Energy, Interoperability, Exportability), in coordination with the AF/A/57C Capability Development Team and AFMC Program Manager. Sponsors/Program Managers should also include a feasibility attestation. The current format, content, and review process will continue until an updated AFI 10-6 is published.

a. Requirements artifact sponsors will submit all performance attributes requiring certification or attestation to the AF Gatekeeper for review and staffing to appropriate AF Agency for Approval / Certification.

(1) The AF Gatekeeper will submit Interoperability KPPs to the JROC for Joint Capability Integration (JCI) certification as directed in CJCSM 5023.02 (Manual for the JROC and the Joint Force Requirements Process (JFRP)).

(2) The Force Protection and Survivability (including Cyber, Electromagnetic Spectrum and Kinetic Survivability) performance attributes are no longer mandatory by law or OSW guidance. AF A5/7C may direct certification of these attribute areas if deemed necessary to support the requirement.

(3) Exportability KSA: Requirements artifact sponsors are still responsible for complying with all applicable Exportability acquisition directives in DODI 5000.85. This performance attribute may be included in the requirement artifact where it is part of the requirement and strategy for the system, or may be completed during the acquisitions process.

b. Waiver Requests: Requirements artifact sponsors will submit all performance attribute waiver requests to the AF Gatekeeper for review and staffing to the appropriate AF Agency for approval.

(1) By NDAA guidance, OSW (A&S) remains the waiver approval authority for the Sustainment and Energy performance attributes.

7. All reformed processes and guidance will be codified in forthcoming updates to AFPD 10-6, *Force Modernization Roles & Responsibilities*, and AFI 10-601, *Force Modernization Execution*. All organizations are expected to support this transition to ensure the seamless alignment of modernization efforts.

Direct questions related to this interim guidance to:

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Attachment:
Air Force Requirements Action Plan