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# **Air Force Letter of Offer and Acceptance Process Improvements**

**By**

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The Air Force has taken a deliberate and focused approach to improving our Letter of Request (LOR) and Letter of Offer and Acceptance Data (LOAD) processes. The Air Force security assistance (SA) community recognized that it would be beneficial, to the USAF and our partners, if both of these processes could be improved. For both, the Air Force created project teams to conduct comprehensive Rapid Improvement Events (RIEs) to review and recommend improvements.

In September 2008 the LOR RIE addressed various deficiencies throughout the foreign military sales (FMS) LOR process. The FMS LOR process begins with the receipt of the LOR from the international partner and ends with the requirements validation. The intervening process suffers periodically because these deficiencies have not been addressed, typically resulting in an expedited but inaccurate final product. The team looked at the entire process from pre-LOR, through the date of the LOR request and LOR Receipt Date to LOR Complete. As with the LOAD process, subject matter experts (SMEs) from the Air Force SA community met and completed a thorough review of the LOR process, identifying key areas where the LOR could be improved, including:

- The lack of communication between the various entities involved in the process, including Air Force centers, government agencies and U.S. defense industry
- The lack of a standardized and documented process for creating, collecting and distributing LORs
- The lack of clear policy guidance available for use by all entities, including our foreign partners

Development of a standard process, recommended policy changes, training initiatives and performance metrics and controls were all paramount to the success of the RIE. Critical tasks which are currently being followed through by the Air Force are:

- Training Cooperation Offices (SCO) and international partners to ensure an executable LOR is received at the consolidated LOR entry point
- Developing standard checklists for various systems and implementing them across the Air Force
- Implementing a consolidated entry point within Air Force for all LORs to be hosted at the Air Force Security Assistance Center's (AFSAC).
- Developing an LOR automated tool which is currently in the Requirements Definition Phase with an Estimated Completion Date of mid-2010

In November 2008, various SMEs from throughout the Air Force SA community conducted the LOAD RIE. The stated purpose was to review and assess the LOA development process, starting with the LOR Validation (LORVALID) milestone to the Standard LOAD Complete (SLOADCOMP) milestone. Key objectives of the event are listed on the next page:

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- Standardize a process across the Air Force to identify customer requirements and generate those requirements to the contracting activity
  - Achieve goals, objectives, and deliverables by applying Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century (AFSO21) principles and tools to get there
  - Challenge the way we do business
  - Develop a real implementation plan

Additional definite goals were established to:

- Streamline and develop the process steps and standardize the process
- Develop Performance Measurements
- Establish a 30-day goal process for government and contractor responses
- Validate the quality of LOR and case development packages to 90 percent complete
- Reduce rework of the cases

Several recommended changes presented in the form of action items include:

- Technical changes such as automating the Prepline Task Milestone and Military Articles and Services List Switch and deleting the Standard LOAD Start (SLOADSTART) Milestone
- Policy changes including deleting the SLOADSTART Milestone, and the requirements for standalone MTDS
- Increased training for the SA community in DSAMS

To date, the project team continues meeting and coordinating on the various action items, recognizing that the improvements are ongoing. A major obstacle for the United States Air Force is the fact that our LOAD and LOR processes typically involve major articles that require cautious and deliberate execution, which often means lengthy periods of execution. Even with this being the case, the Air Force continues to seek ways to improve our processes for the benefit of the entire security assistance community.

### **About the Author**

Mr. Glenn Anderson is the Deputy Chief, Security Assistance Policy and International Training and Education Division, Policy Directorate, Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs. He develops, implements, and oversees Air Force Security Cooperation policy and implements and/or facilitates policy concerning all international flight training and professional military education as directed by the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force. He ensures all United States Air Force Security Cooperation programs and activities are consistent with national security strategy, legislation, and Department of Defense directives and procedures. In addition, he chairs the working group responsible for all Air Force Security Cooperation Community process improvement initiatives.