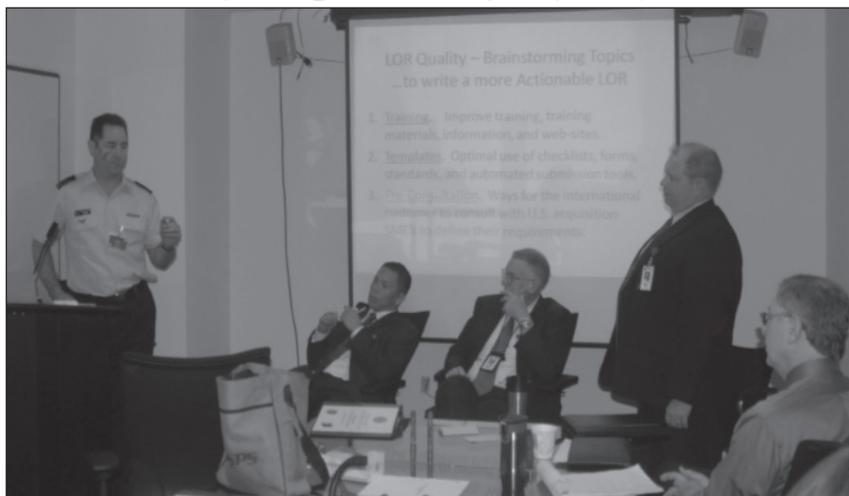

Lean Six Sigma Project Pursues Improved Letters of Request

By

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Australian Air Force, Wing Commander discusses LORs with other attendees at the Rapid Improvement Event.

Defense Security Cooperation Agency's (DSCA's) Letter of Request (LOR) Quality Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Project team recently began the second phase of a project focused on helping the agency's international partners write complete and informative LORs.

This LOR Phase II group was very productive, said Tom Keithly, Project Green Belt. We created lists of specific actions in three related areas: LOR Training, LOR Templates, and the use of pre-consultation discussions.

He also pointed out that one idea that got traction was to create a central online point, such as the DSCA home page, for customers and practitioners to go to for LOR reference information.

The main objective in all this is getting an actionable LOR, said Keith Rowe, the project sponsor. By that, I mean we need to get an LOR that not only matches what we have available in U.S. inventory, but an LOR that helps the recipient program office say, Yes, we have the information we need to start writing the Letter of Acceptance.

LORs are a vital element in the overall process of Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Through the submission of an LOR, a country does not just state what it needs, it must reflect considerable advance work defining and describing what is releasable and what suits the country's military requirements. There are also administrative issues presented in preparing the LOR such as what format it should be written in, who signs it, and who receives it. Additionally, issues of content are vital to enabling the recipient—normally a program or project office—to understand what is to be done.

Attendees of the event included DSCA personnel and representatives from various organizations who deal with LOR policy and handling including the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Defense Security Assistance Development Center, and the Defense Institute of Security Assistance

Management (DISAM). The group reviewed information and drafted several solutions that could be implemented quickly. Frank Campanell from DISAM did an in-depth review of DISAM training materials and web sites. Each military department outlined its own training sites, LOR templates, and recent process improvements.

Wing Commander Peter Cluff, Australian Air Force, discusses LORs with other attendees at the Rapid Improvement Event.

JP deRooji from the Dutch Embassy and Peter Cluff from the Australian Embassy also briefed the group on work done by the Foreign Procurement Group and the customer perspective.

At the group's next meeting, an action plan will be drafted to execute its ideas.

For more information on LSS, go to the "Continuous Process Improvement/Lean Six Sigma (CPI/LSS)" section of the DSCA intranet.