



RESEARCH  
AND ENGINEERING

**UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR**  
3030 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3030

JAN 30 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIR, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION BOARD

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference – Study on Optimal Organizational Structure for Digital Solution and Software Delivery

All-domain dominance is underpinned by rapid, nimble, and leading-edge digital hardware and software engineering practices and their swift employment by the warfighter. Organizational structures which are excessively siloed, hierarchical, or hidebound by cumbersome processes may prove unequal to this imperative. While the exigencies of national security differ from those of the commercial sector, the more agile structures and processes of the latter may impart applicable lessons to the defense enterprise.

Per Section 907 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2026, the Secretary shall direct the Science, Technology and Innovation Board (STIB) “to conduct a comprehensive study to evaluate and recommend the most optimal organizational structure within the Office of the Secretary of War to align and maximize the output of digital solutions engineering and software delivery activities across the Department of War.” (“the Study”)

To successfully deter and defeat the nation’s adversaries, the Office of the Secretary of War (OSW) must reconsider its legacy organizational structure. Therefore, the STIB, is directed to conduct a study that will include:

- An assessment of existing organizational structures and organizations supporting digital solutions engineering and software delivery across the Department of War (DoW), including:
  - Current responsibilities, requirements, deliverables of software delivery organization across the DoW;
  - Limitations based on current enterprise data management platforms;
  - Optimization of resource allocation and utilization processes; and
  - Integration challenges and opportunities with Department-wide digital solution engineering and software delivery initiatives.
- An evaluation of potential organizational courses of action for supporting digital solutions engineering within the OSW, including:
  - Establishment of a new defense agency or DoW field activity; **For Open Publication**

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- Integration into an existing defense agency or DoW field activity;
  - Consolidation of digital development functions within existing OSW staff organizations;
  - Optimization of current organizational structures and authorities;
  - Hybrid approaches combining elements of the options described above; and
  - Any other organizational structure deemed appropriate by the STIB.
- Recommendations on the selection of the optimal organizational structure, including:
    - Analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each course of action evaluated;
    - Evaluation of the cost-effectiveness and resource implications;
    - Application of lessons learned from similar industry or academic entities performing similar work;
    - Consideration of governance and execution framework requirements;
    - Assessment of the implementation of and execution of governance structures, including artificial intelligence model management; and
    - Recommendations for unique acquisition authorities to support rapid digital solutions engineering and deployment.
  - Transition recommendations for implementing the selected organizational structure, including:
    - Detailed implementation timeline and milestones;
    - Resource requirements and funding mechanisms; and
    - Legislative or regulatory changes needed.

The STIB will determine findings, observations, and recommendations thorough, open discussion and deliberation at a properly noticed and public meeting, unless it must be closed in accordance with one or more of the exemptions found in subsection 552b(c) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.). The STIB will provide its findings and recommendations to USW(R&E) as the sponsor of the STIB. The nominal start date of the study period for these terms of reference (ToR) will be within 30 days of when this ToR is signed or the appointment of study members, whichever is later in time. In no event will the duration of the study exceed 12 months from the start date of meetings to development of the final

briefing/report, unless an extension is granted. In support of this ToR and the work conducted in response to it, the STIB has my full support to meet with Department leaders. The STIB staff, on behalf of the STIB/study members, may request the OSW and DoW Component Heads to timely furnish any requested information, assistance, or access to personnel to the STIB/study members. All requests shall be consistent with applicable laws; applicable security classifications; DoD Instruction 5105.04, "Department of Defense Federal Advisory Committee Management Program"; and this ToR. As special government employee members of a DoW federal advisory committee, the study members will not be given any access to DoW networks, to include DoW email systems.

Once material is provided to the STIB, it becomes a permanent part of the STIB's records. All data/information provided is subject to public inspection unless the originating Component office properly marks the data/information with the appropriate classification and Freedom of Information Act exemption categories before the data/information is released. The STIB has physical storage capability and electronic storage and communications capability on both unclassified and classified networks to support receipt of material up to the TS/SCI level.

The Board/study members will operate in conformity with and pursuant to the Science, Technology and Innovation Board charter; chapter 10 of title 5, U.S. Code (commonly known as "the Federal Advisory Committee Act"); subsection 552b(c) of title 5, U.S. Code; and other applicable federal statutes, regulations, and policy. Individual Board and Study members do not have the authority to make decisions or provide recommendations on behalf of the Board nor report directly to any Federal representative. Members engaged in the Study are subject to certain Federal ethics laws, including section 208 of title 18, U.S. Code, governing conflicts of interest, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct regulations in 5 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2635.

Point of Contact is Ms. Elizabeth Kowalski, Designated Federal Officer, Defense Science Board at [elizabeth.j.kowalski.civ@mail.mil](mailto:elizabeth.j.kowalski.civ@mail.mil), 703-571-0082.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emil Michael", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Emil Michael