**Introduction**

This document is intended to illustrate the design process used to build and maintain the Acquisition Process Model (APM). In 2009, in response to direction from SAF/AQX, the Acquisition Chief Process Officer requested the development of a process model that addressed the following capability gap – the Air Force needed a single model that provided a consolidated view of the entire “Big A” acquisition process. In February 2016, the USecAF and VCSAF directed the Institutionalization of the APM as part of the implementation of the Air Force Strategic Master Plan. In addition to devoting a section to the memo, this document provides the basics about the development and maintenance of the resulting model.

**Design Parameters**

Similar to any acquisition program, the APM began with a purpose statement bounded by a set of Key System Attributes (KSAs) and Key Performance Parameters (KPPs). The purpose of the APM is to provide an authoritative source for the current state “Big A” acquisition process as described and defined in law, policy, and/or guidance. The KSAs for the APM are accuracy, currency, portability, and flexibility. The initial KPPs include the time to incorporate relevant changes in law, policy, and/or guidance as well as system availability. The intended audience of the APM is the acquisition workforce with particular emphasis on the Program Executive Officer/Program Manager and his/her staff.

The hierarchy of the APM resembles that of a classic work breakdown structure. The APM is composed of a series of interconnected processes with associated decomposition as relevant for the audience. The hierarchy provides sufficient detail to explain the high-level processes without serving as a proscriptive checklist for step-by-step actions.

The overall model is designed to incorporate a variety of process perspectives, with emphasis on the requirements process described in the Joint Capability Integration Development System (JCIDS) – CJCSI 3170 series; the acquisition process defined in DoDI 5000.02 and DoDI 5000.75; and the Programming, Planning, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) process defined in AFPD 90-6; and Program Management processes described in the Defense Acquisition Guidebook (DAG) and AFPAM 63-128. In addition to key instructions, such as AFI 63-101/20-101, AFI 10-601, and AFI 99-103, these documents serve as the foundation for developing, process naming and identifying the inputs and outputs within the model.

The process design construct is two-fold. First, the APM uses the process types as defined by Dr. Michael Hammer: Governing, Enabling, and Core. Governing processes guide or direct other processes; Core processes create the outputs that meet stated requirements of the organization, and Enabling processes support the execution of the core activities. Second, the process metadata is intended to provide succinct yet vital information to the audience. Every process has the following minimum set of metadata:

* Process name (short reference for the purpose of the process),
* Description of the process (based on the information contained within the document defining the process),
* Process owner (the organization(s)/person(s) will authority over the execution and result of the process),
* Process performers (organization(s)/person(s) who participate in the execution of the process)
* Reference document (the authoritative source(s) for the process), and
* Active link (hyperlink to the document(s)).

All processes contain direct links to these documents for ease of use and additional insight. Further, as available, the model contains relevant templates that serve as starting points for the audience. These templates do not serve as checklists – leadership should tailor them as necessary based on the specific needs of the program.

Another process element of the model is the input/output construct. The design of the APM reflects the key inputs and outputs for the relevant processes based on information contained in the underlying authoritative document. These inputs and outputs for the process reflect the information provided in the underlying document. This design decision avoids unnecessary clutter to the model.

**Benefits of the APM**

The APM provides a variety of benefits.

* Establishes standard definitions and activities associated with Air Force Acquisition.
* Provides process decomposition from DAE/SAE through the PM-level actions
* Serves as a standard reference model for all stakeholders, including links to relevant templates and documents.
* Provides common context for process improvement initiatives and integration context for other externally related process models.
* Provides process input to Acquisition Enterprise Architecture and supports other Enterprise Architectures.

Because the APM provides the framework which defines the acquisition process for the Air Force acquisition enterprise, all other acquisition models shall align with it**.**

**General APM Taxonomy**

As mentioned earlier, the model uses a work breakdown structure, with each level being referred to as a tier. Generally speaking, each tier has a specific focus/responsibility level.

* Tier 0 (the context diagram numbered 1.0) is defined as the Macro Process level with responsibility at the SAE/DAE level.
* Tier 1 (numbered 1.x) is the Process area with responsibility at the SAE/2 LTR level.
* Tier 2 (numbered 1.x.x) is the Subprocess area with responsibility at the PEO/3LTR level.
* Tier 3 (numbered 1.x.x.x) is the Supporting Process area with responsibility at the PEO/4LTR level.
* Tier 4 (numbered 1.x.x.x.x) is the Activity area with responsibility at the PM level.
* Tier 5 (numbered 1.x.x.x.x.x) is the Sub activity area with responsibility at the PM/AO level.
* Tier 6 (numbered 1.x.x.x.x.x.x) is the Action area with responsibility at the AO level.
* Tier 7 (numbered 1.x.x.x.x.x.x.x) is the Sub-action area with responsibility at the Journeyman level.
* Tier 8 and below (numbered 1.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x) is the Supporting Action area with responsibility at the trainee level.

The original design level of the APM was Tier 4. The APM includes greater levels of detail in select areas consistent with direction from the Acquisition Chief Process Officer.

**Active Surveillance**

With currency as a KPP, the APM leverages an active surveillance process to keep the model up to date. This process includes a monthly Configuration Control Board (CCB), which provides a forum to discuss the identification of changes in key documents discovered during active surveillance, the recommended updates to the model based on the identified changes and the prioritization of those changes consistent with Air Force priorities. Sources of active surveillance include Air Force Publications, DoD Issuances, and the Defense Acquisition Guidebook.

**Institutionalizing the APM Guidance**

As part of the evolution of the APM, SAF/AQ issued a guidance memorandum informing the acquisition community about the capabilities and benefits of the APM. In addition to stating that the APM “provides an authoritative source to support the continuum of acquisition process” and serves “as a valuable tool to PEOs, PMs, and their staffs in obtaining up-to-date acquisition guidance,” the memo also directed the establishment of an APM Working Group (APMWG). The APMWG identifies both content and functional expansions to the APM as well as specific CPI initiatives to improve aspects of the acquisition process.

**Software**

The design tool for the APM currently is Casewise by Erwin. The primary factors for selecting Casewise are as follow:

* Overall accessibility of the APM
* Additional operating system/browser options (e.g., Chrome, Edge, Safari, Mozilla)
* Downloadable/exportable information to Excel
* Enhanced metadata capability (e.g., maps performers/owners to the process)
* Multiple search capabilities
* Robust data dictionary
* Future linkage to information systems and authoritative data sources supporting processes