



RESEARCH
AND ENGINEERING

DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3030 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3030

October 6, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEFENSE INNOVATION BOARD

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference – Lowering Barriers to Innovation

As technological advances become increasingly global and commercially based, the Department of Defense (“DoD” or “the Department”) must continue to build bridges with communities of innovation and be a partner of choice for the private sector and academia. Keeping the Department imbued with a culture of innovation will better position it to protect the nation and its allies, and stay head of future threats. The Department has an unprecedented opportunity to reinvigorate a dynamic defense innovation ecosystem that increasingly serves as a force multiplier for U.S. national security and the rules-based international order.

The Department has undertaken several initiatives to outpace adversaries by investing in future technological capabilities – from establishment of the Innovation Steering Group and AI and Data Acceleration (ADA) initiative to the Rapid Defense Experimentation Reserve, release of the National Defense S&T Strategy, elevation of the Defense Innovation Unit, creation of the Office of Strategic Capital, and most recently the formation of Task Force Lima and the Replicator initiative. However, legacy policies, procedures, and talent management practices hinder the Department from adopting and scaling innovation into capabilities at the volume and velocity required. As Deputy Secretary Hicks stated in her remarks on August 28, 2023, “We all know the challenges and we all know the stakes. This is not about understanding the problems, or lack of leadership focus, or insufficient resources. This is about systematically tackling the highest barriers to enabling and unleashing the potential of U.S. and partner innovations – some in DoD or our labs or elsewhere in government, but most of all outside of it.” Often overlooked are the high-impact innovations and cultural shifts that can be unleashed with the smallest or simplest changes.

Therefore, I hereby task the Defense Innovation Board (“the Board”) to deliver a study on Lowering Barriers to Innovation. The Board will identify the highest barriers to enabling and unleashing the potential of U.S. and partner innovations and then develop a list of ideas or recommendations that fall within existing DoD authorities and are focused on the people, policy, and procedures that will decrease complexity and empower the Department to adopt and scale innovation at the speed of relevance. The recommendations should focus on procedures that align Department incentives, policies for accelerating and scaling new warfighting capabilities, and practices that inspire and attract the next generation of innovators. These recommendations should be wide-ranging – across security, acquisition, information technology, and human capital – and actionable, with the goal of laying the groundwork needed to compete and overmatch in a technology and innovation driven environment. The Board should also address related matters it determines relevant to this task.

The Board shall thoroughly consider and deliberate on its independent assessment and recommendations at a properly noticed and public meeting, unless the meeting must be closed to the public pursuant to one or more of the exemptions found in subsection 552b(c) of title 5, U.S. Code. The Board shall develop its recommendations within 120 days of this memorandum.

In support of this Terms of Reference (ToR) and the work conducted in response to it, the Board has my full support to meet with Department leaders. The Board staff, on behalf of the Board, may request the Office of the Secretary of Defense and DoD Component Heads to timely furnish any requested information, assistance, or access to personnel to the Board. All requests shall be consistent with applicable laws; applicable security classifications; DoD Instruction 5105.04, "Department of Defense Federal Advisory Committee Management Program," dated August 6, 2007; and this ToR. As special government employee members of a DoD federal advisory committee, the Board members will not be given any access to DoD networks, to include DoD email systems.

Once material is provided to the Board, it becomes a permanent part of the Board'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 to the Board. The Board has physical storage capability and electronic storage and communications capability on both the unclassified and classified networks to support receipt of material up to the Secret level.

The Board will operate in conformity with and pursuant to the Board's charter; chapter 10 of title 5, U.S. Code; subsection 552b(c) of title 5, U.S. Code; and other applicable Federal statutes, regulations, and policy. Individual Board members do not have the authority to make decisions or provide recommendations on behalf of the Board nor report directly to any Federal representative. The members of the Board 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 C.F.R., Part 2635.

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cc:
Senior Pentagon Leadership
Directors of Defense Agencies
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