Abstract

A report is made on the Edinburgh meeting. Information concerning the development of the, for ECBSers, important ISO/IEC 15288 standard on System Life Cycle processes is provided. Plans for the Working Group meeting in Washington are presented.

1. The Meeting in Edinburgh

Mr. Stuart Arnold of DERA and editor of ISO/IEC 15288 was invited to present one of the keynote addresses at the Edinburgh conference. Stuart made an excellent, thought provoking presentation entitled, "The Changing Role of Systems Engineering." He emphasized that the scope of systems engineering has changed from a development oriented point of view to consider the entire life cycle as well as the involvement of all stakeholders having a vested interest in a system. His key message was that we all do "systems engineering".

The standards workshop that followed the conference was not particularly well attended, despite a call for participation that was issued prior to the meeting. In any event, the meeting provided an excellent opportunity for three of the key people involved in the 15288 to have a forum for discussing both technical and non-technical issues related to the standard.

2. ISO/IEC 15288

The standard is progressing towards becoming a significant international standard. In its role, it will become a vital standard in relationship to the new ISO 9001:2000 Quality Standard. The 9000 standard does not provide guidance on defining processes, it just provides a means for managing, evaluating and improving what is there. On the other hand, 15288 provides excellent guidance for the important processes in respect to Enterprise, Agreement, Project, and Technical aspects. These processes, organized according to 15288 can form the basis for quality evaluation and improvements.

Along with the development of the standard, a vocabulary and way of thinking about systems as well as systems in their environment has evolved. Central to the notion of systems are such terms as:

- System of Systems
- A System of Interest supported by Enabling Systems
- System in it's Operational Environment

The standard is applied to one System of Interest at a time. The standard is applied to an Enabling System, when it becomes the System of Interest. Thus, all enabling systems involved in a life cycle for handling Requirements, Design, Production, Logistics, etc. become separate system applications of the standard. Likewise, all other systems that cooperate with the System of Interest, along with their Enabling Systems are treated in turn by the standard. This reuse of the standard is an important aspect leading to a much simpler and powerful standard. (Expected to be no more than 60 pages.)

The standard, as of January 2001 has reached the status of CD3 (Third Committee Draft). It is expected that it will reach to status of International Standard by 2Q year 2002.

3. The Meeting in Washington

At the Washington meeting, Harold Lawson has been invited to present a talk on the subject of Life Cycle Standards for Systems and Software. He will relate information concerning the existing software life cycle standard (ISO/IEC 12207) as well as some experiences with its utilization. The talk will also cover the background as well as the development of the 15288 standard for System Life Cycle Processes.

At the time of preparing this report, the details of the Standards Working Group meeting in Washington have not been finalized. However, some key players in the standards arena have been contacted and it is expected that the meeting will lead to interesting presentations and debate.