

TECHNICAL INSIGHTS

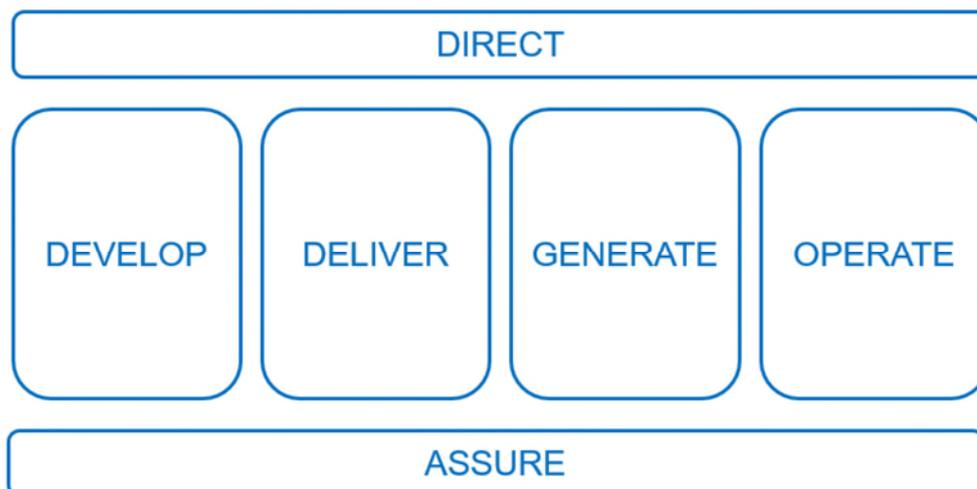
CAPABILITY COHERENCE

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM OF CAPABILITY COHERENCE?

Capability coherence is a subject that generates a lot of debate when discussed. There is much anecdotal and informal evidence that by not consciously addressing capability coherence Defence risks:

- Capabilities that do not meet the intended strategic objectives;
- Capabilities that are not deliverable in the planned budget or are not financially sustainable in-service;
- Capabilities that do not work together when they are required to;
- Capabilities that arrive at the wrong time, at insufficient levels of maturity, or not at all;
- Capabilities that are not operated at their full potential, or at all.

One aspect that clouds the subject is the definition of capability coherence. Within Niteworks we prefer to take a pragmatic approach, recognising that there are different meanings of capability coherence across MOD, most easily characterised within the capability management functions of the operating model (described in the Capability Management Practitioners Guide). The Capability Management Practitioners Guide (CMPG) sets the high level processes for capability management and is structured around the functions shown in figure below. Each of the Command Top Level Budgets (TLBs) is structured broadly around these functions, so this is a sensible way to characterise different types of capability coherence across MOD.



High Level Processes for Capability Management

In each of these functional areas, capability coherence is primarily focussed on:
DIRECT at strategic level (Head Office) – financial alignment and what value is being delivered by which Command TLB;
DIRECT at strategic level (Command TLB) – financial alignment and what capability is being delivered when;

DEVELOP capability – how capability is delivered over time, across the Defence lines of development (DLOD) and across Command TLB using the CMPG and programme and project management methodologies

DELIVER capability – acquiring capability, within a single DLOD and across the DLOD using the Acquisition System Handbook and current programme and project management methodologies

GENERATE and OPERATE capability – how capability is generated and then operated in theatre, at operational and tactical levels.

With the ASSURE function, the focus is on assuring capability coherence through the Defence Authority for Capability Coherence.

Within each of the functions, the ways in which capability coherence is achieved and the associated challenges are different.



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WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING COHERENCE?

To manage and enhance capability coherence the foremost critical aspect is **clarity of capabilities and their boundaries**. This is common to and necessary across all the processes within each functional area. DIRECT and ASSURE processes require this in order to deliver the capability coherence accountability associated with their processes.

Within DEVELOP, the need to **capture and understand capability gaps/overlaps** is critical to the ability to direct resources in the most efficient manner for the acquisition and sustainment of the capability into the future.

Within DELIVER, **managing a capability's inter and intra-dependencies** is critical to achieving capability coherence. In addition to this, being able to establish economies of scale across multiple and disparate areas, as well as utilising modular design to best effect, is core to achieving the resource benefits of capability coherence.

Within GENERATE and OPERATE, **aligned and well-developed capability concepts** (CONEMP, CONOPS, CONUSE) that have been developed alongside the developing capability are critical to ensuring that the capabilities are operated to their full potential.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO ACHIEVE ENHANCED COHERENCE?

The challenges associated with enhancing coherence are complex and there is no easy route to addressing them. Experience within Niteworks suggests that a common taxonomy, tackling inter and intra-dependencies as well as vocal sponsorship are all steps that would go towards enhancing capability coherence across MOD. Without such initiatives, the capability coherence risks identified earlier are likely to be manifest and the delivery of 'joined-up' capabilities is likely to be impeded.

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