

Terms of Reference

Commercial Science and Technology Panel

Background

In the current environment of severely limited budgets for Department of the Navy (DON) science and technology (S&T), it is essential to recognize, understand and take maximum advantage of other, complementary or supplementary, S&T investments. Foremost among these are the investments made in science and (mostly) technology by the commercial sector of industry. Although generally useful in planning DON S&T investment strategy, knowledge of commercial sector S&T strategy is particularly critical in areas where DON has chosen to rely on commercial, off-the-shelf technologies (COTs).

If DON COTs strategy is to be successful over the long term, it is important to:

1. thoroughly understand the relevant commercial S&T investment strategies in order to be able to anticipate the most likely future course of COTs; and
2. identify opportunities to influence, where possible and appropriate, the course of commercial S&T in order to insure its continued relevance to DON needs.

Failure to do this may result in DON finding future COTs unsuitable for its needs without time and resources to develop satisfactory alternatives.

The Office of Naval Research International Field Office (ONRIFO) has selected Commercial S&T as a focus for its European office.

Specific Tasking

The NRAC Panel on Commercial Science and Technology is constituted to advise the Commanding Officer and Technical Director of ONRIFO in the pursuit of an improved understanding of European commercial S&T investment strategy in areas related to DON dependence upon COTs.

1. Identify appropriate commercial industrial sectors, relevant to DON COTs reliance, where European industries play significant international roles. Computer, telecommunication and environmental sensor technologies are suggested as examples.
2. Establish an in-depth understanding of the intermediate-to-long-term S&T investment strategy of the industrial sectors identified in (1) above. (This is anticipated to require one or more European visits and could take advantage of ONRIFO's existing International Science Lecture Series contract with the National Research Council to invite appropriate National Academy of Engineering and/or National Academy of Science members to participate in the visits.)

3. Identify mutually beneficial opportunities for DON S&T collaboration in the commercial industrial sectors reviewed.

Sponsors

Study Sponsor: The Honorable H. Lee Buchanan, Assistant Secretary of the Navy
(Research, Development and Acquisition)

Study Administrator: RADM Paul G. Gaffney, USN, Chief of Naval Research and NRAC
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