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MEMORANDUM FOR DOD STANDARDIZATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Guidance on Development and Adoption of Non-Government Standards (NGS)

The heightened emphasis within the Department of Defense on the use of commercial items, practices, and processes, has resulted in extensive efforts to replace military and federal specifications and standards with NGS. Since our reform efforts began in June 1994, we have adopted an additional 1700 NGS, and have replaced or are in the process of replacing hundreds of military specifications and standards with these documents. We commend and encourage such efforts.

We must keep in mind, however, that our goal is not to develop and use NGS for the sake of avoiding government specifications and standards. Our goal is to increase our access to commercial products and practices, and NGS are one way to achieve that goal.

There is a very simple acid test for determining whether a government specification or standard is a good candidate to become a non-government standard. Will the resultant standard be used by the commercial sector? If the answer is yes, then it is a good candidate. If the answer is no, then the DoD still has many alternatives to non-government standards, including DoD performance specifications and commercial item descriptions. Any effort to develop a NGS that is not for a commercial product or does not specify a process or practice that truly will be used industry wide is discouraged. DoD should not participate in such efforts, nor should the NGS be adopted. In those instances where industry elects to develop a NGS for a canceled government document, the DoD must ensure a valid internal need exists for the NGS before a decision is made to adopt the document.

Some NGS developing organizations have offered to cover sheet existing government specifications and standards in order to shift document maintenance responsibility in a rapid manner. This is acceptable, and the NGS may be adopted, if all of the following conditions apply:

- The government document is currently being used as the commercial industry standard.
- It is reformatted as a NGS with a new document identifier. Dual document identifiers which retain the military document number are not acceptable (e.g., NAS/MS12345). However, it is acceptable for the NGS to retain the military part identification number (PIN).
- It does not duplicate another NGS, which has already been adopted by the DoD.

One of the proposed schemes for cover-sheet adoption by a NGS organization would require DoD personnel to sign the cover sheet acknowledging the new ownership. Preparing activities should not sign such cover sheets. Also, while there is pressure to develop NGS rapidly as replacement documents, DoD personnel should not request NGS developing organizations to circumvent their due processes for establishing standards development efforts.

We hope you find this guidance useful, but if you require further clarification or an exception to this guidance, please contact your Departmental Standardization Office (DepSO).

Andrew D. Certo

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cc: DepSOs