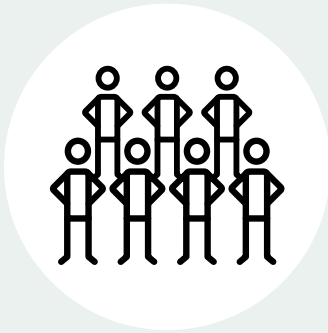


Software Acquisition Go Bag

User's Guide



Who should use this document?

You! This user's guide is for **everyone** involved in a software acquisition program—whether you are using the DoW's SWP or not. Whether you are a member of leadership, software development, engineering, program management, contracts, costing, logistics, testing, sustainment organization, or you are a user, requirements owner (i.e., sponsor), development contractor, or another stakeholder, this document is for you!

How does the Go Bag help me?

Here are a few examples of roles and how Go Bag might help. You may be

- **a program manager** in a PMO who is considering how best to adopt the SWP for the software of a system that is an MCA program
- **a sponsor** looking to understand how to draft a CNS that captures high level requirements and allows for trade space during development
- **a tester** in a Product Team who is trying to understand how users will be involved in future demonstrations
- **a defense contractor** for a software acquisition program who wants to implement meaningful quality and progress metrics

On the next pages we'll explain, in detail, all the groups and roles that the Go Bag will cover.

What will I learn from this guide?

You will learn what to expect and how to navigate the Software Acquisition Go Bag.

Acronyms

CAE	Component Acquisition Executive
CNS	Capability Needs Statement
DA	Decision Authority
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDI	Department of Defense Instruction
DoW	Department of War
MCA	Major Capability Acquisition
PEO	Program Executive Officer
PM	Program Manager
PMO	Program Management Office
SWP	Software Acquisition Pathway

What do I need to know?

What's in the Go Bag?

We'll use the following terms when referring to the Go Bag:

Software Acquisition Go Bag (or Go Bag for short)

An extensible collection of tailorable kits that program teams can use to enable the delivery of software capabilities at the speed of need.

Tactical Guide

A document that contains tools and techniques for executing and implementing the elements of your software program. Examples include topics such as collaborating with stakeholders, obtaining and leveraging the right data, managing expectations, preventing or recovering from common pitfalls, and measuring what matters to stay on course.

Supplement

An asset that contains material that augments the contents of one or more Tactical Guides. Examples include webinars, podcasts, templates, fact sheets.

Kit

A curated collection of Tactical Guides and Supplements related to specific topic area, such as our first Kit, SWP Essentials. You can also select Tactical Guides and Supplements to create your own kit.

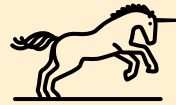
When will Go Bag Tactical Guides and Supplements be released?

We will release new Tactical Guides and Supplements iteratively as we identify and prioritize needs and receive your feedback. Every few weeks, we will release a new Tactical Guide and host a companion webcast. As we work with DoW program teams, we will update the Go Bag with new kits, supplemental tools, templates, and more—all based on proven successful practices. To be informed of new releases and updates in tool development, subscribe to our mailing list.

What will they look like?

Consistent look and feel

We've developed the Go Bag with you in mind. Tactical Guides and Supplements will include easy-to-follow layouts that include graphics, icons, acronyms & definitions, examples, and explanations (or additional insights) that meet you where you are.



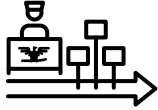
We'll even work to dispel myths where we can! Look for this sort of treatment to find such myths.

We want you to feel like one of our experts is sitting next to you, listening to your needs and giving you advice.

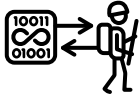
Go Bag Tactical Guides and Supplements will also link to additional resources, preview upcoming assets, link to our website, provide information about subscribing to our mailing list, and include links for you to provide feedback.


Who's who?


The following cards contain the names of groups and roles we use throughout Go Bag. We will clearly mark each Tactical Guide and Supplement with the icons that correspond to its intended audience. These markings will help you identify which materials are most directly related to your needs.


	<p>1. Program Management Office</p>
<p>A formally designated organizational entity responsible for managing an acquisition program and providing centralized authority, accountability, and resources for the execution of program responsibilities across the lifecycle.</p> <p><i>This entity includes roles such as program managers, engineers, cost analysts, cyber security experts, logisticians, contracting specialists, program test personnel, and support staff.¹</i></p> <p>Depending on the program, this entity might also include a product owner who fulfills that role on the product team.</p>	


	<p>2. Sponsor (sometimes called Requirements Owner)</p>
<p>The individual or organization who holds the authority and advocates for needed end-user capabilities and associated resource commitments.</p>	

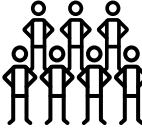
	<p>3. User</p>
<p>The person who ultimately uses the software solution.</p> <p>A user (or end user) conveys operational concepts, requirements, and needs; participates in capability prioritization and continuous testing activities; and provides feedback on developed capabilities.</p>	

	<p>4. Product Team</p>
<p>A multidisciplinary team that is typically funded to develop a system, software, or other warfighting capability through a formal mechanism (e.g., contract, agreement, interdepartmental request)</p> <p><i>This team could be a government team or a contractor/ vendor team. This team includes roles such as project manager, development team member, system integrator, finance specialist, contracting specialist, and product test and evaluation team member.²</i></p> <p>Depending on the program, this team might include an additional product owner who shares that role with or interacts with the product owner in the PMO.</p>	

	<p>5. Decision Authority</p>
<p>The official responsible for oversight and key decisions of programs that use the software acquisition pathway in accordance with DoDI 5000.87 and component policies.</p> <p><i>The DA designates a PM and supports them in tailoring and streamlining processes, reviews, and decisions to enable speed of capability delivery. The DA may be the defense acquisition executive, CAE, PEO, or other official designated by the CAE. The preference is for the DA to be at the lowest level practicable.²</i></p>	

	<p>6. Test & Evaluation Team</p>
<p>A team that performs processes that exercise and evaluate a system or components, under specified conditions, with the intent to obtain performance, operational suitability, and survivability information.</p> <p><i>This team conducts tests that include developmental and operational testing. While tests also occur within the Product Team, that testing is not included here.³</i></p>	

	<p>7. Certification Authority</p>
<p>The designated official or organization with the formal responsibility to assess and determine whether a system, software, or process meets specified standards, requirements, and policies before it can be approved for use.</p> <p><i>A Certification Authority can work in domains such as cybersecurity, airworthiness, nuclear surety, system safety, and interoperability.⁴</i></p>	

	<p>8. Everyone</p>
<p>All above groups and roles.</p>	

What's next?

Head on over to the [Pack Your Go Bag](#) link on our website to download our Supplement *What is the Software Acquisition Pathway* or our first Tactical Guide, *SWP: Ready, Set, Go!*

Future Tactical Guides and Supplements are in work which will provide more help with software acquisition. Stay tuned!

How do I learn more?

- Visit our Go Bag website at sei.cmu.edu/projects/gobag.
- Learn more about the inspiration for the Go Bag and details about its launch in our [Go Bag Launch Blog](#).

What if I have questions or want to provide feedback?

We hope you do because your Feedback will help us support your journey! Send us questions or feedback at our [Contact Us](#) link.

What if I need more help?

Reach out to us at our [Contact Us](#) link so that we can discuss how the SEI might assist with your specific challenges.

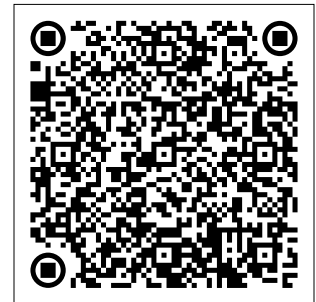
How can I stay engaged with Software Acquisition Go Bag?

We don't want you to miss out on anything! [Subscribe to our mailing list](#) to participate in future Go Bag webinars and be notified about Tactical Guide and Supplement launches.

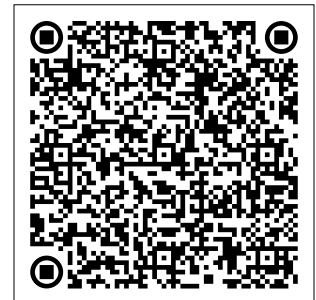
Don't take the journey alone! Invite your program office co-workers, leadership, and stakeholders to join you on this journey by recommending that they also [subscribe](#).



Learn more about the Go Bag project »



Send questions or feedback to our Contact page »



Subscribe to our mailing list for updates »

Endnotes

- 1 This definition is derived from DoD Instruction 5000.02: Department of Defense. *Operation of the Adaptive Acquisition Framework*. DoDI 5000.02. January 23, 2020. <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/500002p.pdf?ver=2020-01-23-144114-093>
- 2 This definition is derived from DoD Instruction 5000.87: Department of Defense. *Operation of the Software Acquisition Pathway*. DoDI 5000.87. October 2, 2020. <https://www.dau.edu/sites/default/files/Migrated/CopDocuments/5000.87%20Software%20Acquisition%20Pathway.pdf>
- 3 This definition is derived from this guidebook: Department of Defense. *Software Developmental Test and Evaluation in DevSecOps Guidebook*. January 27, 2025. https://www.cto.mil/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Software_DTE_DEVSECOPS_GB_Jan2025_Signed.pdf
- 4 This definition is derived from multiple sources, including the following:

Department of Defense. *The Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Survivability Policy*. DoDI 3150.09. April 8, 2015. <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/315009p.PDF?ver=2018-10-11-074425-453>

Department of Defense. *DoD Airworthiness Policy*. DoDI 5030.61. December 3, 2024. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/503061p.PDF?ver=a4--jubJTtO3HPR0IUN_cQ%3d%3d

Department of Defense. *Cybersecurity*. DoDI 8500.01. March 14, 2014. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/850001_2014.pdf

Department of Defense. *Risk Management Framework for DoD Systems*. DoDI 8510.01. July 19, 2022. <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/851001p.pdf?ver=2019-02-26-101520-300>

Software Acquisition *Go Bag*

About the SEI

Always focused on the future, the Software Engineering Institute (SEI) advances software as a strategic advantage for national security. We lead research and direct transition of software engineering, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence technologies at the intersection of academia, industry, and government. We serve the nation as a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and are based at Carnegie Mellon University, a global research university annually rated among the best for its programs in computer science and engineering.

Contact Us

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
SOFTWARE ENGINEERING INSTITUTE
4500 FIFTH AVENUE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15213-2612

sei.cmu.edu
412.268.5800 | 888.201.4479
info@sei.cmu.edu

Copyright 2025 Carnegie Mellon University.

This material is based upon work funded and supported by the Department of Defense under Air Force Contract Nos. FA8702-15-D-0002, and FA870225DB003 with Carnegie Mellon University for the operation of the Software Engineering Institute, a federally funded research and development center.

The view, opinions, and/or findings contained in this material are those of the author(s) and should not be construed as an official Government position, policy, or decision, unless designated by other documentation.

NO WARRANTY. THIS CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY AND SOFTWARE ENGINEERING INSTITUTE MATERIAL IS FURNISHED ON AN "AS-IS" BASIS. CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY MAKES NO WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, AS TO ANY MATTER INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, WARRANTY OF FITNESS FOR PURPOSE OR MERCHANTABILITY, EXCLUSIVITY, OR RESULTS OBTAINED FROM USE OF THE MATERIAL. CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY DOES NOT MAKE ANY WARRANTY OF ANY KIND WITH RESPECT TO FREEDOM FROM PATENT, TRADEMARK, OR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT.

[DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A] This material has been approved for public release and unlimited distribution. Please see Copyright notice for non-US Government use and distribution.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. Requests for permission for non-licensed uses should be directed to the Software Engineering Institute at permission@sei.cmu.edu.

DM25-1561