

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense's Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) is charged with assisting in the prioritization of capability needs from a joint perspective and helping guide investments. The JROC is supported by the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process. However, a congressional committee and GAO have expressed concerns about the extent to which JCIDS has been effective in prioritizing capability needs. The Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 required GAO to provide a report on the effectiveness of JCIDS in several areas. In addition to responding to this direction, GAO has more broadly evaluated the extent to which (1) the Joint Staff has developed and implemented an analytic approach to prioritize capability needs and (2) the JROC has considered aspects of the availability and operational support of weapon systems—called sustainment—when validating the requirements of proposed capability solutions. To do so, GAO analyzed capability documents, reviewed relevant guidance and law, and interviewed officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1) revise and implement JCIDS guidance to reflect recent changes to the process and establish criteria and measures for determining the relative importance of capability needs and (2) require program sponsors to address each criterion in JCIDS guidance related to sustainment in capability documents. DOD partially concurred with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-12-339](#). For more information, contact John Pendleton at (202) 512-3489 or pendletonj@gao.gov.

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

Guidance and Progress Measures Are Needed to Realize Benefits from Changes in DOD's Joint Requirements Process

What GAO Found

After studying the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process since September 2010, the Joint Staff began initiating actions in October 2011 to better prioritize capability needs and align those needs with available budgetary resources. Specifically, according to Joint Staff officials, the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) has begun to consider the benefits and affordability of new capabilities within the context of joint capability areas and to evaluate possible duplication before validating new capability requirements. The Joint Staff has begun to implement a new approach to support JROC prioritization of capability needs, but the new approach is still evolving and has not been fully developed and clearly documented. New guidance does not clearly outline goals of the new approach, develop and communicate the analytic approach envisioned to support JROC decision making, or set out criteria and accompanying measures of progress. GAO previously reported that JCIDS's ability to prioritize needs could be improved if it had an analytic approach to reviewing and validating proposals that would help ensure that the most important capability needs of the department are addressed. Until the Joint Staff takes steps to fully develop, document, and institutionalize the new analytic approach, it is not clear whether the current momentum for improving the JCIDS process will be sustained.

JCIDS guidance in effect through December 2011 required that sponsors of potential major defense acquisition programs address sustainment information in capability development documents according to four metrics—materiel availability, operational availability, reliability, and ownership cost. Each of these metrics includes a set of potentially reportable criteria or data, which are listed as review criteria and are suggested, but not clearly required by the guidance, to be included in the metric. Based on GAO's analysis of six capability development documents, GAO found that all of the documents provided information on the four required sustainment metrics, but the completeness of information for all of the metrics' key criteria varied. Further, in some cases information that should have been included, according to Department of Defense officials, was not provided. The Joint Staff issued updated JCIDS guidance in January 2012, but the guidance still does not clearly require program sponsors to report on the individual criteria for each of the four sustainment metrics. Without complete and detailed information on each of the individual criteria elements, the JROC may not have the information it needs to make the most informed decisions when validating the requirements of proposed solutions intended to mitigate capability gaps.