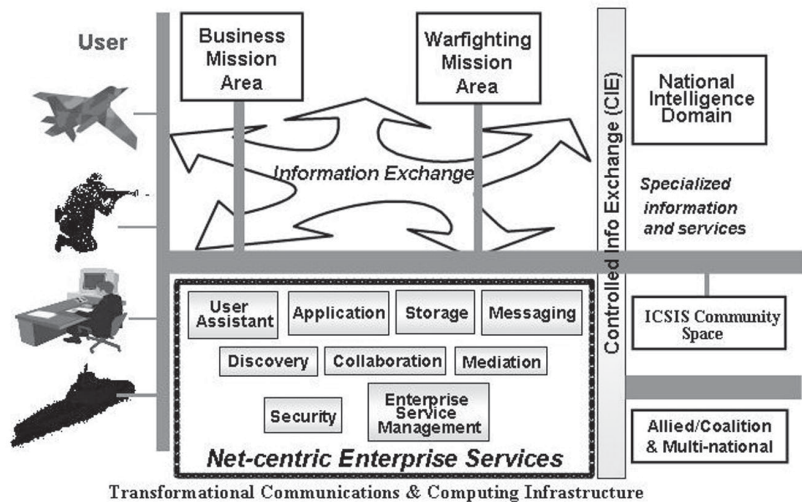# Net-Centric Enterprise Services (NCES)

SUMMARY

- Net-Centric Enterprise Services (NCES) is not a single system or part of a family-of-systems or system-of-systems; it is a suite of services.
- NCES capabilities include on-demand access, collection, processing, storage, dissemination, and management of information to warfighters, policy-makers, and support personnel.
- DOT&E approved the NCES Test and Evaluation Strategy in support of a July 2004 Milestone A. The strategy uses the concept of testing Evaluation Capability Modules (ECMs) - a "bundle" of various NCES services.
- The NCES program is pursuing an aggressive schedule with Milestone B approval in 4QFY05. The Test and Evaluation Master Plan (TEMP) development is in its very early stages.

NCES enables the end user to do an intelligent pull of mission-tailored information from anywhere within the network.

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION AND MISSION

NCES is not a single system or part of a family-of-systems or system-of-systems; it is a suite of services. These services receive a request for data from a user and then satisfy that request by getting data or information from various other systems "plugged" into the network. The NCES enables the end user to do an intelligent pull of mission-tailored information from anywhere within the network with minimal delay, ensuring the timeliness and relevance of the data. NCES is a collaborative effort of the Joint Staff, the Assistant of the Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration, and the Defense Information Systems Agency.

Services provided by NCES must be compatible with the Global Information Grid (GIG). NCES (which is part of the GIG Enterprise Services) provides a common set of net-centric, interoperable information capabilities across the GIG, and replaces the Defense Information Infrastructure Common Operating Environment. NCES capabilities include on-demand access, collection, processing, storage, dissemination, and management of information to warfighters, policy-makers, and support personnel. NCES supports the entire DoD and Intelligence communities, conventional and nuclear warfighting, and business elements. It acts as the interface between DoD and non-DoD organizations.

The program follows an evolutionary acquisition strategy. NCES currently consists of three increments, with multiple spirals per increment. Fielding of the Increment 1 spirals starts in FY07 and ends in FY09.

TEST AND EVALUATION ACTIVITY
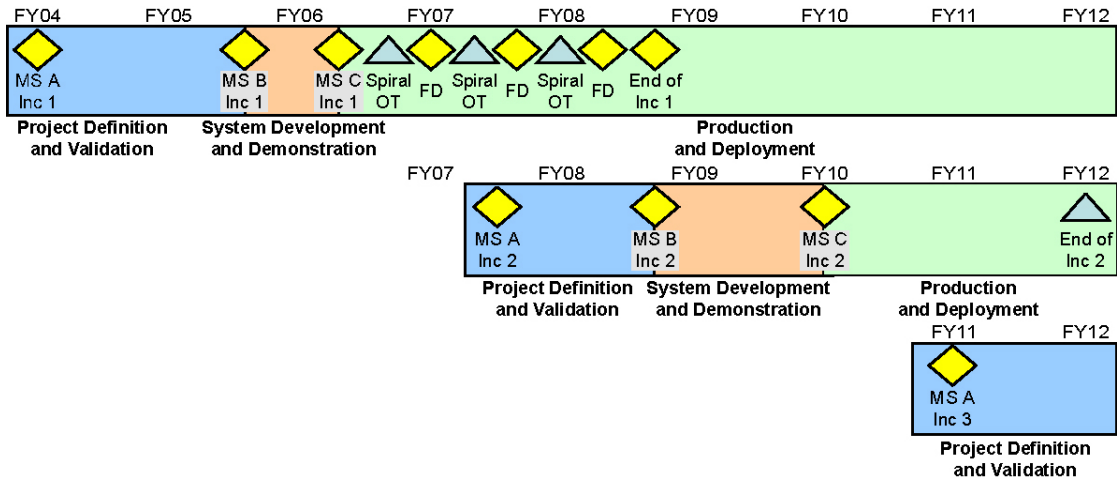
The program entered the acquisition process with a Milestone A review in July 2004. DOT&E approved a Test and Evaluation Strategy in support of that Milestone based on the concept of testing Evaluation Capability Modules (ECMs). An ECM is a "bundle" of various NCES services that provide improved capabilities to the warfighter/user. User priorities determine which services within that ECM "bundle" make up a given spiral.

The test strategy consists of a series of pilot and test phases on the ECMs until they achieve sufficient maturity. The Milestone Decision Authority must approve an ECM before it is operationally fielded.   A multi-Service Test and Evaluation Working Group will begin development of the TEMP as soon as the program office identifies the first sets of ECMs and the capabilities documentation stabilizes.

The current focus is on developing the Capabilities Design Document. The program office intends to stand up a user's group consisting of members from key organizations in order to achieve continuous representation from the Services and Combatant Commands.

TEST AND EVALUATION ASSESSMENT
The NCES program is pursuing an aggressive schedule with a Milestone B approval in 4QFY05. TEMP development for Milestone B is in its very early stages. Immediate identification of ECMs and definition of capabilities is critical in order to meet this schedule.

The NCES program office intends to form a partnership with the National Security Agency and other programs using the NCES services prior to Milestone B. This partnership must provide a clear delineation of who is responsible for development of Information Assurance tools and capabilities. Synchronization of these developments is critical for effective NCES fielding.

Development and testing will leverage the results and lessons learned from the Horizontal Fusion, Net-Centric Capabilities Demonstration, and Rapid Acquisition Incentive –Net-Centricity pilots.

The ability of NCES to support "tactical edge" users subject to their known bandwidth constraints is a significant concern. The program office must examine the feasibility of defining a sub-set of NCES capabilities that provide essential functionality, but take into account the restricted bandwidth with which the receiving users of the data or information live.