

# TRANSFER FROM IMMATURITY TO PARTIAL MATURITY

## A NAVAL SUPPORT COMMAND WARSHIP PROJECT MANAGER'S VIEW

by

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### ABSTRACT

The formation of the Naval Support Command (NSC) and the associated division of design and support responsibility between the NSC and the Sea Systems Controllerate, has led to the development of a concept of partial maturity. This article discusses the process of transferring the Type 23 frigate from immaturity to partial maturity.

### **Introduction**

When the Naval Support Command (NSC) was formed, one of the key objectives was to provide a clear focus for the customer. This was achieved by

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centring all in-service support elements in a single organization. Within the Director General Fleet Support (Ships) organization there has been the amalgamation of:

- The upkeep groups from the Director General Ship Refitting.
- The mature ship design sections from the Director General Surface Ships.
- Parts of the Flag Officer Surface Flotilla engineering staff.

This has produced a team whose responsibilities for the material availability of ships is not confined to any particular period or facet of the ship, but covers the whole of the ships operational life. This approach allows funds to be targeted at the most needed areas and, because the organization is simpler, enables the removal of much of the bureaucracy. The benefits are clear and the effects have rapidly become apparent.

The picture is, however, complicated by the progressive nature of the development of ships and equipment and the long overlap of the production and in-service phases, particularly for ships. To deal with these difficulties and to clarify the points at which responsibility for design and support of equipment transfers from the Sea Systems Controllerate (SSC) of the Procurement Executive (PE), who acquire the equipment, to the NSC, who support the equipment during the in-service phase, the concept of maturity has been developed.

There are three stages of project maturity:

(a) *Immature*

Where all responsibility lies in the SSC.

(b) *Fully mature*

Where all responsibility lies with the Chief of Fleet Support (CFS).

(c) *Partially mature*

Where responsibility is divided between CFS and SSC.

The difficult area is partial maturity; here responsibility is divided but in general the PE remains the design authority while the NSC has responsibility for in-service support (support authority).

There is a requirement for a transfer agreement to be produced on each occasion that responsibility for an individual project or part of a project shifts. Transfer agreements:

- Record formally the change in responsibility for the project.
- Ensure that transfers are carried out in accordance with an agreed set of guidelines.
- Act as a vehicle for the transfer to be approved.

They are written jointly by the SSC and NSC project managers.

In 1994, the Assistant Director Type 23 in the SSC and the Assistant Director Ships/Warships 2 in the NSC, successfully negotiated the transfer agreement for Type 23 frigates from immaturity to partial maturity. This article summarizes the lessons learned from the process.

### **Splitting responsibility**

Transfer agreements are negotiated and written by the project managers. This concept is very powerful. Ownership generates a will to deliver a workable system. The T23 agreement has been developed by a working group of all the section leaders from each project. The first and most difficult questions tackled were:

- What are the responsibilities of the NSC and SSC projects for partially mature ships?
- Do these responsibilities overlap?
- Are there any gaps?

These questions are difficult because, although there is a great deal of experience in both the SSC and the NSC of being both the design authority and the support authority at the same time, there has never been a need to separate the functions. The following broad definitions have been agreed:

(a) *Design Authority*

The design authority is the agency responsible for the specification, realization and maintenance of the design. The design authority is responsible for:

- i. Satisfaction of the staff requirement.
- ii. Definition and maintenance of the design intent.
- iii. Authorization of change to design.
- iv. Maintenance of design disclosure documentation.
- v. The safety of the design.

(b) *Support Authority*

The support authority is the agency responsible for the maintenance of the material safety and availability of the ships allocated to him. (The use of the word 'material', simply indicates that the NSC is not responsible for those elements of safety which are dependent on a trained and effective ships staff.)

From these basic definitions the rest of the transfer agreement has developed. As the support authority is responsible for material availability, it is clear that they should be the first point of contact for ships and operating authorities. As the design authority is responsible for changes to design, it follows that they should develop the Guidance Information for Alterations and Additions (As&As). However, as the support authority implements the changes they take the lead in the administration of the A&A process.

### **Class transfer and individual ship transfer**

Ship production buys are normally small, rarely more than a handful at a time, and design baselines frequently change between buys. The ship building programme normally lasts for many years, 17 in the case of the T23. Also as a ship is a complex integrated system a graduated process of acceptance and transfer from the contractor has been developed. Ships staff are actively involved in the work-up of their ship, gradually taking on responsibility for parts of the ship until at Operational Date Material Assessment (ODMA) the whole ship is declared fit for service and transferred from the control of the Procurement Authority Warship Project Manager to the operating authority. All these factors lead to the conclusion that it is not practical to transfer all of the ships at the same time. A concept of class and individual ship transfer has therefore emerged for the T23. Ships will transfer from immaturity to partial maturity at approximately the same time as they enter service ie. at ODMA. There will be one class transfer agreement which applies to all ships and states the overarching agreements between the project managers. This will be supplemented by individual ship transfer statements which define the state of each ship at its transfer.

### **Ship safety management**

Ship safety management is a difficult area to address because the MoD's policies for safety certification are changing. However, once again the basic definitions of design authority and support authority have provided the principles which allow more detailed procedures to be developed.

The SSC will address the safety of the design and confirm at transfer of each ship that, when properly maintained and operated, the design is safe. New

requirements for safety will be addressed, as they arise, by the SSC; whether they arise from legislation or are driven by MoD initiative or standards.

The NSC will:

- Publish maintenance documentation and schedules provided by the SSC.
- Survey and audit equipment to establish material condition.
- Certify the material safety of ships which have been transferred to partial maturity against the design standards provided by the SSC. Where departures from the designed state are identified the SSC will be consulted.

The SSC will review all proposed changes to the design and certify, normally as part of the Guidance Information package, that the change will not adversely affect safety.

### **OPDEFs and S2022s**

Responsibility for the rectification of OPDEFs and replying to S2022 is straightforward. As part of its responsibility for material availability it is clear that the NSC should be the primary point of contact for T23 OPDEFs and S2022 for post-ODMA ships, but should refer to the SSC any OPDEFs which required a design review or change to design.

### **Support of platform equipment**

As a result of the procurement process for the T23s much of the platform equipment has been chosen and supplied by the shipbuilder: as opposed to the shipbuilder either being supplied with Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) or choosing from a list of MoD approved equipment. Design and support responsibility for this new to service platform equipment is held initially by the Warship Project in the SSC and is passed to NSC Equipment and System Project Managers in Director General Fleet Support (Equipment and Systems), on acceptance by the NSC of the equipment Mod State Zero (MSZ) packages. However, provision of the MSZ packages for equipments is not a condition for transfer to partial maturity of the class and development of the MSZ packages has continued since the signing of the transfer agreement.

### **Keeping in step**

The transfer agreements divide responsibility for the support of ships. However, there is a great deal of business which is of interest and concern to both project managers: regular communication is therefore essential. Normal day to day contact is augmented and focused by a formal project managers meeting held four times a year.

### **The outside worlds view**

Whilst negotiating these agreements the project managers were aware that the new arrangements could become very confusing to the outside world if they were not as simple and unequivocal as possible. Thus the basic guideline is that, for partially mature ships, the NSC project is the first point of contact for ships and administrative authorities. The NSC will contact the SSC project if this is necessary.