

Artist's concept of the planned training campus at St. Athan, Wales.



METRIX ILLUSTRATION

Metrix to take first steps on U.K. Defence Training Review

The U.K. Ministry of Defence has awarded a contract valued at 31 million pounds (\$50.6 million) to Metrix, a joint venture between QinetiQ and Sodexo, as part of Package 1 of the Defence Training Review (DTR) program.

Ultimately, the DTR program could be worth some 12 billion pounds.

Under this initial contract, designated Early Training Transformation (ETT), Metrix — the MoD's preferred bidder for DTR Package 1 — will take first steps toward providing key improvements in technical training for the British armed forces. Package 1 focuses primarily on training for engineering and associated disciplines.

"This is essentially a series of different training change programs, aimed at making training more relevant to current and future operational needs. The kingpin is to determine the enabling technologies that will allow us to take the existing curricula and rework them in line with existing

and anticipated objectives," said David Anderson, managing director of Metrix Training.

The award was made in advance of the main DTR contract, which is expected to be signed next year, but does not imply any delay in the evaluation and conclusion of the main contract, according to informed observers.

"In order to be ready for the move to St. Athan in 2014, it is necessary to undertake a degree of Training Transformation early, hence ETT," said Brigadier Tony Harking, leader of the Integrated Project Team managing Package 1. "ETT will provide both parties with greater confidence that the process is successful when applied to British Forces technical training."

The bulk of the work to be undertaken under ETT will fall to Metrix partner Raytheon.

"We are dealing here with approximately 30 percent of the man-days involved in Package 1, with an approximate timescale of 18 months to complete," said David Appel, director of the Raytheon team in the U.K. "There

will be a small amount of course development and even some delivery of actual training product, but the bulk of this work will be a systems approach across the entire curriculum."

Appel's team will apply four key criteria to the work:

- **Compression** — introduce more simulation and computer-based training in order to reduce course times.

- **Rationalization** — deconstruct current curricula to first principles and take out repetitive or nonproductive training.

- **Harmonization** — look across all three services and eliminate redundancy and repetition, or "teach it once."

- **Distribution** — use multiple locations and distance learning techniques to improve efficiency.

"The key is to identify the right technology at the right time in the learning process — and at the right cost. Instructors, of course, still play a vital role — technology augments, it does not replace," Appel said.

Serious games, virtual worlds and mobile learning are all under

consideration as appropriate technologies, according to Raytheon team member Andy Joseph. "We will certainly focus on some of the highest volume courses, but the intent [of ETT] is to be as generic as possible," he said.

Compatibility with other major training initiatives, such as the Defence Learning Portal (DLP) — the MoD's main channel for distributed learning — will also be in the ETT brief, Appel said.

Other distribution channels will sit alongside, operate with or complement initiatives such as DLP.

"We envision the creation of a number of Metrix Learning Centres — probably less than 20 — to replicate some of the major benefits of the Defence Technical College to be established at St. Athan," Anderson said. "The architecture we will adopt would allow for such centers to be located in operational locations such as Afghanistan, but we see the majority of them being located in the U.K. and Germany."

ETT is an early start on the major work of training transformation that will constitute DTR, but it will be "rolled up" into the main contract on signature of the latter, Anderson said. The timing of that signature will depend, to a degree, on the continuing evaluation process taking place in the MoD and Treasury.

—Tim Mahon