

# System Realization

From SEBoK

[System Realization](#)

[Jump to navigation](#) [Jump to search](#)

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[System realization](#) System realization activities are conducted to create and test versions of a system as specified by [system definition](#) system definition. The activities are grouped and described as generic processes that are performed iteratively and/or concurrently depending on the selected [life cycle model](#) life cycle model. These activities include those required to build a system ([system implementation](#) system implementation), integrate disparate system elements ([system integration](#) system integration), and ensure that the system meets both the needs of stakeholders ([system validation](#) system validation) and aligns with the system requirements and architecture ([system verification](#) system verification).

These activities are not sequential, but are performed concurrently, iteratively and recursively depending on the selected [life cycle model](#). Figure 1 (see "Overview", below), also shows how these processes fit within the context of [system definition](#) system definition and [System Deployment and Use](#) KAs. See also [Applying Life Cycle Processes](#) for further discussion of the relationships between process and life cycle model.

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## Contents

- [1 Topics](#)
- [2 Overview](#)
- [3 Fundamentals](#)
  - [3.1 Macro View of Realization Processes](#)
- [4 References](#)
  - [4.1 Works Cited](#)
  - [4.2 Primary References](#)
  - [4.3 Additional References](#)

## Topics

Each part of the SEBoK is divided into KAs, which are groupings of information with a related theme. The KAs in turn are divided into topics. This KA contains the following topics:

- [System Implementation](#)
- [System Integration](#)
- [System Verification](#)

- [System Validation](#)

See the article [Matrix of Implementation Examples](#) for a mapping of case studies and vignettes included in Part 7 to topics covered in Part 3.

## Overview

Essentially, the outputs of [system definition](#) are used during [system implementation](#) to create [system elements](#) and during [system integration](#) to provide plans and criteria for combining these elements. The requirements are used to [verify](#) and [validate](#) system elements, systems, and the overall [system-of-interest](#) (SoI). These activities provide feedback into the system design, particularly when problems or challenges are identified.

Finally, when the system is considered, verified, and validated, it will then become an input to [system deployment and use](#). It is important to understand that there is overlap in these activities; they do not have to occur in sequence as demonstrated in Figure 1. Every life cycle model includes realization activities, principally, verification and validation activities. The way these activities are performed is dependent upon the life cycle model in use. (For additional information on life cycles, see the [Life Cycle Models](#) KA.)



**Figure 1. System Realization.** (SEBoK Original)

The realization processes are performed to ensure that the system will be ready for transition and has the appropriate structure and behavior to enable the desired operation and functionality throughout the system's life span. Both DAU and NASA include transition in realization, in addition to implementation, integration, verification, and validation (Prosnik 2010; NASA December 2007, 1-360).

## Fundamentals

### Macro View of Realization Processes

Figure 2 illustrates a macro view of generic outputs from realization activities when using a Vee life cycle model. The left side of the Vee represents various design activities 'going down' the system.



**Figure 2. The Vee Activity Diagram (Prosnik 2010).** Released by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU)/U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

The left side of the Vee model demonstrates the development of system elements specifications and design descriptions. In this stage, verification and validation plans are developed, which are later used to determine whether realized system elements ([products](#), [services](#), or [enterprises](#)) are compliant with specifications and [stakeholder requirements](#). Also, during this stage initial specifications become flow-down requirements for lower-level system models. In terms of time frame, these activities take place early in the system's life cycle. These activities are discussed further in the [System Definition](#) KA. However, it is important to understand that some of the system realization activities are initiated at the same time as system definition activities; this is the case with integration, verification and validation planning in particular.

The right side of the Vee model, as illustrated in Figure 2, shows the system elements (products, services, or enterprises) are assembled according to the system model described on the left side of the Vee (integration). Verification and validation activities determine how well the realized system fulfills the stakeholder requirements, the system requirements, and [design properties](#) design properties. These activities should follow the plans developed on the left side of the Vee. Integration can be done continuously, incrementally and/or iteratively, supported by verification and validation (V&V) efforts. For example, integration typically starts at the bottom of the Vee and continues upwards to the top of the Vee.

The U.S. Defense Acquisition University (DAU) provides an overview of what occurs during system realization:

*Once the products of all system models have been fully defined, Bottom-Up End Product Realization can be initiated. This begins by applying the Implementation Process to buy, build, code or reuse end products. These implemented end products are verified against their design descriptions and specifications, validated against Stakeholder Requirements and then transitioned to the next higher system model for integration. End products from the Integration Process are successively integrated upward, verified and validated, transitioned to the next acquisition phase or transitioned ultimately as the End Product to the user. (Prosnik 2010)*

While the systems engineering (SE) technical processes are life cycle processes, the processes are concurrent, and the emphasis of the respective processes depends on the phase and maturity of the design. Figure 3 portrays (from left to right) a notional emphasis of the respective processes throughout the systems acquisition life cycle from the perspective of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). It is important to note that from this perspective, these processes do not follow a linear progression; instead, they are concurrent, with the amount of activity in a given area changing over the system's life cycle. The red boxes indicate the topics that will be discussed as part of realization.



**Figure 3. Notional Emphasis of Systems Engineering Technical Processes and Program Life-Cycle Phases (DAU 2010).** Released by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU)/U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

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[< Previous Article](#) | [Parent Article](#) | [Next Article >](#)

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[Categories](#):

- [Part 3](#)
- [Knowledge Area](#)

## Navigation menu

### Personal tools

- [Log in](#)

### Namespaces

- [Page](#)
- [Discussion](#)

## Variants

## Views

- [Read](#)
- [View source](#)
- [View history](#)
- [PDF Export](#)

## More

## Search

## Stewards



### ◦ Quicklinks

- [Main Page](#)
- [Letter from the Editor](#)
- [Governance and Editorial Boards](#)
- [SEBoK Sponsors](#)
- [Acknowledgements and Release History](#)
- [FAQs](#)

### ◦ Outline

- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Part 1: SEBoK Introduction](#)
  - [Introduction to the SEBoK](#)
    - [Scope of the SEBoK](#)
    - [Structure of the SEBoK](#)
  - [Introduction to Systems Engineering](#)
    - [Systems Engineering Overview](#)
    - [Brief History of Systems Engineering](#)
    - [Systems Engineering Principles](#)
    - [Systems Engineering Heuristics](#)
    - [Economic Value of Systems Engineering](#)
    - [Systems Engineering: Historic and Future Challenges](#)

- [Systems Engineering and Other Disciplines](#)
  - [Systems Engineering Core Concepts](#)
- [SEBoK Users and Uses](#)
  - [Use Case 0: Systems Engineering Novices](#)
  - [Use Case 1: Practicing Systems Engineers](#)
  - [Use Case 2: Other Engineers](#)
  - [Use Case 3: Customers of Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Use Case 4: Educators and Researchers](#)
  - [Use Case 5: General Managers](#)
- [Part 2: Foundations of Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Systems Fundamentals](#)
    - [Introduction to System Fundamentals](#)
    - [Types of Systems](#)
    - [Complexity](#)
    - [Emergence](#)
    - [Fundamentals for Future Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Systems Approach Applied to Engineered Systems](#)
    - [Overview of Systems Approaches](#)
    - [Engineered System Context](#)
    - [Identifying and Understanding Problems and Opportunities](#)
    - [Synthesizing Possible Solutions](#)
    - [Analysis and Selection between Alternative Solutions](#)
    - [Implementing and Proving a Solution](#)
    - [Deploying, Using, and Sustaining Systems to Solve Problems](#)
    - [Applying the Systems Approach](#)
  - [Systems Science](#)
    - [History of Systems Science](#)
    - [Cycles and the Cyclic Nature of Systems](#)
    - [Systems Approaches](#)
  - [Systems Thinking](#)
    - [What is Systems Thinking?](#)
    - [Concepts of Systems Thinking](#)
    - [Principles of Systems Thinking](#)
    - [Patterns of Systems Thinking](#)
  - [Representing Systems with Models](#)
    - [What is a Model?](#)
    - [Why Model?](#)
    - [Types of Models](#)
    - [System Modeling Concepts](#)
    - [Integrating Supporting Aspects into System Models](#)
    - [Modeling Standards](#)
- [Part 3: SE and Management](#)
  - [Introduction to Life Cycle Processes](#)
    - [Generic Life Cycle Model](#)
    - [Applying Life Cycle Processes](#)
    - [Life Cycle Processes and Enterprise Need](#)
  - [Life Cycle Models](#)
    - [Life Cycle Process Drivers and Choices](#)
    - [Life Cycle Process Models: Vee](#)
    - [Life Cycle Process Models: Iterative](#)
    - [Integration of Process](#)

- [Lean Engineering](#)
- [Concept Definition](#)
  - [Business or Mission Analysis](#)
  - [Mission Engineering](#)
  - [Stakeholder Needs and Requirements](#)
- [System Definition](#)
  - [System Requirements](#)
  - [System Architecture](#)
  - [Logical Architecture Model Development](#)
  - [Physical Architecture Model Development](#)
  - [System Design](#)
  - [System Analysis](#)
- [System Realization](#)
  - [System Implementation](#)
  - [System Integration](#)
  - [System Verification](#)
  - [System Validation](#)
- [System Deployment and Use](#)
  - [System Deployment](#)
  - [Operation of the System](#)
  - [System Maintenance](#)
  - [Logistics](#)
- [Systems Engineering Management](#)
  - [Planning](#)
  - [Assessment and Control](#)
  - [Risk Management](#)
  - [Measurement](#)
  - [Decision Management](#)
  - [Configuration Management](#)
  - [Information Management](#)
  - [Quality Management](#)
- [Product and Service Life Management](#)
  - [Service Life Extension](#)
  - [Updates, Upgrades, and Modernization](#)
  - [Disposal and Retirement](#)
- [Systems Engineering Standards](#)
  - [Relevant Standards](#)
  - [Alignment and Comparison](#)
  - [Application](#)
- [Part 4: Applications of Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Product Systems Engineering](#)
    - [Product SE Background](#)
    - [Product as a System Fundamentals](#)
    - [Relate Business Activities](#)
    - [Product SE Key Aspects](#)
    - [Product SE Special Activities](#)
  - [Service Systems Engineering](#)
    - [Service Systems Background](#)
    - [Fundamentals of Services](#)
    - [Properties of Services](#)
    - [Scope of Service Systems Engineering](#)

- [Value of Service Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Service Systems Engineering Stages](#)
- [Enterprise Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Enterprise SE Background](#)
  - [The Enterprise as a System](#)
  - [Related Business Activities](#)
  - [Enterprise SE Key Concepts](#)
  - [Enterprise SE Process Activities](#)
  - [Enterprise Capability Management](#)
- [Systems of Systems \(SoS\)](#)
  - [Architecting Approaches for SoS](#)
  - [Socio-Technical Features of SoS](#)
  - [Capability Engineering](#)
- [Healthcare Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Overview of the Healthcare Sector](#)
  - [Systems Engineering in Healthcare Delivery](#)
  - [Systems Biology](#)
  - [Lean in Healthcare](#)
- [Part 5: Enabling Systems Engineering](#)
  - [Enabling Businesses and Enterprises](#)
    - [SE Organizational Strategy](#)
    - [Determining Needed Capabilities](#)
    - [Organizing Business to Perform SE](#)
    - [Assessing SE Performance](#)
    - [Developing SE Capabilities](#)
    - [Culture](#)
  - [Enabling Teams](#)
    - [Team Capability](#)
    - [Team Dynamics](#)
    - [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) **\*\*New Article\*\***
    - [Technical Leadership in SE](#)
  - [Enabling Individuals](#)
    - [Roles and Competencies](#)
    - [Assessing Individuals](#)
    - [Developing Individuals](#)
    - [Ethical Behavior](#)
- [Part 6: Related Disciplines](#)
  - [Systems Engineering and Environmental Engineering](#)
  - [Systems Engineering and Geospatial/Geodetic Engineering](#) **\*\*New Article\*\***
    - [Overview of Geospatial/Geodetic Engineering](#) **\*\*New Article\*\***
    - [Relationship between Systems Engineering and Geospatial/Geodetic Engineering](#) **\*\*New Article\*\***
  - [Systems Engineering and Industrial Engineering](#)
  - [Systems Engineering and Project Management](#)
    - [The Nature of Project Management](#)
    - [An Overview of the PMBOK® Guide](#)
    - [Relationships between Systems Engineering and Project Management](#)
    - [The Influence of Project Structure and Governance on Systems Engineering and Project Management Relationships](#)
    - [Procurement and Acquisition](#)
    - [Portfolio Management](#)



- [Systems Engineering and Software Engineering](#)
  - [Software Engineering in the Systems Engineering Life Cycle](#)
  - [The Nature of Software](#)
  - [An Overview of the SWEBOK Guide](#)
  - [Key Points a Systems Engineer Needs to Know about Software Engineering](#)
  - [Software Engineering Features - Models, Methods, Tools, Standards, and Metrics](#)
- [Systems Engineering and Quality Attributes](#)
  - [Human Systems Integration](#)
  - [Manufacturability and Producibility](#)
  - [System Affordability](#)
  - [System Hardware Assurance \*\*\\*\\*New Article\\*\\*\*\*](#)
  - [System Reliability, Availability, and Maintainability](#)
  - [System Resilience](#)
  - [System Resistance to Electromagnetic Interference](#)
  - [System Safety](#)
  - [System Security](#)
- [Part 7: SE Implementation Examples](#)
  - [Matrix of Implementation Examples](#)
  - [Implementation Examples](#)
  - Defense System Examples
    - [Submarine Warfare Federated Tactical Systems](#)
    - [Virginia Class Submarine](#)
  - Information System Examples
    - [Complex Adaptive Taxi Service Scheduler](#)
    - [Successful Business Transformation](#)
    - [FBI Virtual Case File System](#)
  - Management System Examples
    - [Project Management for a Complex Adaptive Operating System](#)
  - Medical System Examples
    - [Next Generation Medical Infusion Pump](#)
    - [Medical Radiation](#)
    - [Design for Maintainability](#)
  - Space System Examples
    - [Global Positioning System](#)
    - [Global Positioning System II](#)
    - [Russian Space Agency Project Management Systems](#)
    - [Cassini/Huygens](#)
    - [Hubble Space Telescope](#)
    - [Applying MB Approach for 30 Meter Telescope](#)
    - [MSTI Spacecraft](#)
    - [Apollo 1 Disaster](#)
  - Transportation System Examples
    - [Denver Baggage Handling](#)
    - [FAA Advanced Automation System](#)
    - [FAA NextGen](#)
    - [UK Route Modernisation](#)
    - [Korean Light Transit System](#)
  - Utilities Examples
    - [Northwest Hydro System](#)

- [Singapore Water Management](#)
- [Part 8: Emerging Knowledge](#)
  - [Emerging Topics](#)
    - [Socio-technical Systems](#) \*New Article\*
    - [Artificial Intelligence](#) \*New Article\*
    - [Verification and Validation of Systems in Which AI is a Key Element](#) \*New Article\*
    - [Transitioning Systems Engineering to a Model-based Discipline](#)
    - [Model-Based Systems Engineering Adoption Trends 2009-2018](#)
    - [Digital Engineering](#)
    - [Set-Based Design](#)
  - [Emerging Research](#)



- Use the SEBoK
  - [How to Read the SEBoK](#)
  - [Download SEBoK PDF](#)
  - [Copyright Information](#)
  - [Cite the SEBoK](#)
  - [About the SEBoK](#)
- Navigation
  - [Knowledge Areas](#)
  - [Topics](#)
  - [Use Cases](#)
  - [Examples](#)
  - [Glossary of Terms](#)
  - [Acronyms](#)
  - [Primary References](#)
- Toolbox
  - [Recent Changes](#)
  - [Random Page](#)
  - [What Links Here](#)
  - [Special Pages](#)

## Quicklinks

- [Main Page](#)
- [Note to Reviewers](#)
- [How to Read the SEBoK](#)
- [Acknowledgements](#)
- [Copyright Information](#)
- [About the SEBoK](#)
- [Download SEBoK PDF](#)

## Outline

- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Part 1: Introduction](#)
- [Part 2: Systems](#)
- [Part 3: SE and Management](#)
- [Part 4: Applications of SE](#)
- [Part 5: Enabling SE](#)
- [Part 6: Related Disciplines](#)
- [Part 7: Examples](#)

## Navigation

- [Knowledge Areas](#)
- [Topics](#)
- [Use Cases](#)
- [Case Studies](#)
- [Vignettes](#)
- [Glossary of Terms](#)
- [Acronyms](#)
- [Primary References](#)

## Tools

- [What links here](#)
- [Related changes](#)
- [Special pages](#)
- [Permanent link](#)
- [Page information](#)
- [Browse properties](#)

• This page was last edited on 18 May 2021, at 22:12.

- [Privacy policy](#)
- [About SEBoK](#)
- [Disclaimers](#)

