

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

DATE: November 25, 2008

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SUBJECT: NIEM Program Partners With DoD to Support Maritime Information Exchange

On November 5, 2008, the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) program and the U.S. Department of Defense Executive Agent (DoD EA) for Maritime entered into a strategic partnership designed to strengthen information exchange for Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) by leveraging NIEM. Under this agreement, the DoD EA for Maritime will work with the NIEM program to transition the Maritime Information Exchange Model (MIEM) 1.0, developed by the MDA Data Sharing Community of Interest, into NIEM as its maritime information domain component.

This partnership furthers the objectives for ensuring that Maritime Domain Awareness situation intelligence is actionable for homeland security and will ensure the long-term stewardship of the maritime model for information exchange.

MIEM was created as part of the Comprehensive Maritime Awareness Joint Capability Technology Demonstration sponsored by the U.S. Navy and DoD and performed jointly with the Republic of Singapore. The Department of the Navy worked within the established community of interest, including the U.S. Coast Guard, to ensure MIEM would meet the maritime community's requirements for information sharing. The development of MIEM included leveraging significant portions of NIEM and extending beyond NIEM to include maritime-specific elements required for information exchange. The transition of MIEM will allow the maritime community of interest to leverage the tools, training, and governance provided by NIEM at a fraction of the cost.

NIEM (www.niem.gov) was launched on February 28, 2005, as a partnership between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). The NIEM framework provides standard vocabulary, guidance, and processes that help promote effective and efficient information sharing capabilities across organizational boundaries. NIEM is widely adopted within state and local governments, with at least 39 of the 50 states reporting NIEM-conformant information exchange projects. Information sharing within and across DHS and DOJ has shown great gains in the past year with the adoption of NIEM within large implementations, such as DOJ's N-DEX program and DHS's RealID, eVerify, and the Southeast Transportation Corridor Pilot (SETCP) programs. Additionally, NIEM is the information exchange model selected for use in the implementation of the Common Terrorism Information Sharing Standards used within the Information Sharing Environment.

Because of the widespread adoption of NIEM throughout state and local governments, the inclusion of maritime information exchange data components in NIEM offers the potential for much greater information sharing at lower costs to state and local law enforcement and homeland security professionals

who have a need to share information about maritime activities and events. Law enforcement officials at the state and local levels are forging new collaboration efforts with ports and maritime organizations to respond to potential threats in shipping and from suspicious vessels. It is important to create the ability to facilitate information sharing across the domains of maritime, law enforcement, and intelligence—which is the fundamental purpose of NIEM—not just for counterterrorism activities but also for exchanging information related to smuggling, drug interdiction, and other criminal behavior.

Law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over ports, inland waterways, bridges, and other connections to maritime environments realize that the ability to share information about the locations, crew, characteristics, and content of vessels is critical to preventing crime or acts of terror, as well as investigating criminal activity. The magnitude of information sharing that is needed to support collaborative efforts among local, state, and federal agencies requires high-speed, automated systems and a standard for computer-based information sharing across domain boundaries. Having the maritime domain as a part of NIEM will expedite information sharing and increase its efficiency.