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Challenges of the military equipment acquisition system in Poland

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Abstract. This article investigates Poland's military materiel acquisition system, highlighting the persistent challenges that hinder its effectiveness and alignment with contemporary defence needs. Despite over two decades of experience in system development, structural inefficiencies and procedural inconsistencies continue to constrain its performance. The research niche lies in the limited specificity of the academic discourse on military acquisition in Poland, underscoring the necessity for systematic evaluation and reform. The study aims to assess the effectiveness of Poland's military acquisition framework, focusing on its capability to support the operational capabilities of the Polish Armed Forces within the broader context of technical modernisation. It is guided by the hypothesis that systemic and procedural barriers undermine the efficiency of Poland's military acquisition, limiting its ability to adapt to evolving defence requirements. Employing analytical methods such as comparison, synthesis, and generalisation, alongside logical reasoning techniques including deduction, induction, and analogy, the article provides a nuanced understanding of the system's complexities.
Key findings reveal that the system's predominant equipment-focused rather than capability-oriented approach undermines the creative development of defence capability. Challenges such as frequent regulatory changes, fragmented organisational structures, and the absence of a unified life cycle model further exacerbate inefficiencies. The authors conclude that transitioning to a capabilities-based framework, harmonised with NATO standards, and enhancing the legislative and organisational underpinnings of Poland's armaments policy are vital steps. Addressing these issues is critical for improving acquisition processes and ensuring the long-term operational readiness of the Polish Armed Forces.
Keywords: technical modernisation, military equipment, operational capability, system life cycle management, armaments policy

Introduction

This article examines Poland's military materiel acquisition system and the challenges affecting its effectiveness, addressing gaps in the existing literature. It explores the military equipment acquisition process for the Polish Armed Forces (PAF) and its role in capabilities development, highlighting the need to assess the current acquisition framework. The initial sections establish a basis for identifying key challenges and potential reforms. Addressing these shortcomings is essential for enhancing PAF capabilities as part of broader technical modernisation efforts, where military equipment acquisition plays a pivotal role.

The principal research question asks: To what extent do systemic and procedural barriers undermine the effectiveness of Poland's military acquisition system? Guided by the hypothesis that these barriers hinder efficiency, the findings confirm that despite two decades of experience, Poland still faces significant organisational and institutional challenges in military acquisition.

This study employs analytical methods such as comparison, synthesis, and generalisation, alongside logical reasoning techniques. These approaches enable a nuanced understanding of the challenges in Poland's military acquisition system. Although theoretical and cognitive in nature, the analysis draws not only from published literature but also from the authors' two decades of experience within key institutions shaping the acquisition process. Their perspectives span the Armaments Policy Department (MoND), including the Secretariat of the Armaments Council and later the Technical Modernisation Council; the Armaments Inspectorate (now Armaments Agency); and the Military University of Technology, responsible for educating PAF personnel in acquisition processes. This diverse background provides both a temporal dimension and a multi-institutional perspective to the analysis.

The acquisition of military equipment for the Polish Armed Forces in the literature

In Polish literature and within the professional context of the Polish Armed Forces (PAF), the primary category for analysing the military acquisition system is *military equipment*. This term refers to equipment specifically designed or adapted for military purposes, including weapons, ammunition, and war materiel (Decision No. 116/MON, 2021, para. 2, pt. 17). It aligns with the equivalent term in EU directive-level legislation, which required transposition into national law. Accordingly, the definition in the 2009 Defence Directive (Directive 2009/81/EC, 2009, art. 1, pt. 6) mirrors the above and applies to the interpretation of such equipment within the

list of weapons, ammunition, and war materiel adopted by Council Decision 255/58 of 15 April 1958 (Council Decision No. 255/58, 1958, doc. 368/58).

Only after defining *military equipment* do broader categories and concepts emerge for projects, programmes, and defence capabilities. While their scope varies between institutions and states, the PAF employ the concept of *operational capability* as a foundation for planning and development. This broadly refers to "the potential efficiency and capacity of an entity, derived from its attributes and characteristics, enabling it to undertake actions to achieve desired outcomes". Its key components include doctrine, organisation, training, military equipment, human resources, leadership, infrastructure, and interoperability (Logistics Doctrine of the Polish Armed Forces D-4 (B), version 2, 2019, p. 220).

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Generic

⇩

Specific</td><td>POLICY</td><td>Life Cycle Management Policy</td></tr>
<tr><td>STAGES</td><td rowspan="2">AAP-20
Programme Management Framework
(NATO Life Cycle Model)</td></tr>
<tr><td>PROCESSES</td></tr>
<tr><td>SLCM
DOCUMENT
LIBRARY</td><td>ALP-10 (ILS)
AQAPs; ARMPs; ACMPs
NATO Guidance on Unique Identification (UID) of Items
NATO Guidance on Life Cycle Costs (ALCCP-1)
NATO Risk Management Guide
Engineering for System Assurance in NATO Programmes
Life Cycle STANAGs</td></tr>
</table>

Fig. 1. NATO Life Cycle Management Document Framework

Source: AAP-20 –NATO Programme Management Framework (NATO System Life Cycle Model), Edition C, Version 1, October 2015, NATO Standardization Office, 1

Since Poland's accession to NATO in 1999, the country has been obliged to apply Alliance procedures and recommendations in the domain of military acquisition. However, the NATO perspective — shaped by nearly seventy years of collective experience — extends this process to a more comprehensive level of programmes and capabilities, rather than focusing solely on military equipment. NATO's Policy for Systems Life Cycle Management (SLCM) in military acquisition is aimed at achieving "an integrated approach to the delivery of defence-related capabilities for NATO operations" (NATO, 2006, pt. 2.1). The framework for the Systems Life Cycle Management document, which has become one of the most significant concepts in modern systems engineering and management, is illustrated in Figure 1.

Systems Life Cycle Management (SLCM) policy aims to reduce risk, shorten acquisition timelines, facilitate early identification and control of life-cycle costs,

and ensure uniformity, harmonisation, and repeatability in project processes. It also seeks to enable the efficient and coordinated use of resources, information, and technology. In practice, it focuses on enhancing overall defence capabilities — rather than focusing solely on equipment — by considering performance, cost, scheduling, quality, operational environments, integrated logistics support, and obsolescence throughout the system's life cycle.

Within this framework, the "stages" section follows the AAP-20 NATO Programme Management Framework (AAP-20, 2015, p. 1). According to AAP-20, stages may be sequential or overlap, with decisions to proceed, continue, revert, suspend, or terminate hinging on decision gates, each defined by inputs, outputs, entry and exit criteria, and actions. Meanwhile, the "processes" section is guided by AAP-48 NATO System Life Cycle Processes (AAP-48, 2022), which adopts a process-oriented approach to system life cycle activities. AAP-48 outlines 31 interdependent processes forming a complex, interactive framework covering contractual relationships, organisational structures, project-specific activities, and technical operations. Both AAP-20 and AAP-48 reference over 60 additional standardisation documents, including civilian standards and NATO-specific protocols, with ISO/IEC 15288:2002 (Systems Engineering—System Life Cycle Processes) as a central reference (ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288, 2015). Crucially, NATO members may adapt SLCM principles to their national institutions and military needs, ensuring no two military acquisition systems are identical.

Due to its specific nature, military acquisition primarily involves the armed forces but also engages research, academia, and industry. Consequently, apart from source documents from the Ministry of National Defence and NATO, literature on the subject remains relatively sparse, both in Poland and internationally, especially compared to other security and defence topics. This scarcity is further shaped by the sensitive nature of the field. While niche, it remains highly relevant to the public, given its reliance on civilian engineering and logistics methodologies and its broader societal impact.

Nonetheless, domestic research on military acquisition has been conducted through all the two decades, focusing chiefly on experts in research institutes and academic centres who specialise in this domain. Beyond works addressing military acquisition systems *per se* (Zamelek, 2024; Mitkow, 2019, 2014; Pluta, 2018; Pluta and Kalinowski, 2017), most publications examine related specialist areas such as the technical modernisation of the armed forces (Figurski and Niepsuj, 2020; Polak, 2015; Kowalski and Wojciechowski, 2013; Kurczewski, 2012; Brzozowski, 2009; Figurski, Kostrow and Milewski, 2008), defence procurement (Kalwasiński, 2023; Polak and Soczyński, 2016; Ćwik, 2013), or collaboration with research and industrial institutions (Horzela and Owczarczyk, 2022; Soroka et al., 2018; Mirosław et al., 2013).

Capabilities development process in the Polish Armed Forces

The planning process for acquiring defence capabilities in the Polish Armed Forces is guided by four key strategic documents: the Long-term National Development Strategy (Resolution No. 16, 2013), the National Security Strategy ((National Security Bureau, 2020), the Medium-term National Development Strategy (Resolution No. 8, 2017), and the National Security System Development Strategy (Resolution No. 67, 2013). Based on these legal and strategic foundations, the President of Poland, as supreme authority over the Armed Forces, determines the "Main Directions of Development of the Polish Armed Forces..." at the request of the Minister of National Defence, in accordance with Article 25(1)(1) of the Homeland Defence Act (2024).

Updated every four years, the "Main Directions of Development of the Polish Armed Forces…" outlines a 15-year vision and serves as the basis for PAF development programming. It defines key priorities, objectives, and modernization directions for Poland's defence capabilities. Once agreed upon by the National Security Office and the Ministry of National Defence (MoND), the final document is submitted to the President as an annex to the Minister of National Defence's request. Upon approval, the President issues a decision defining the "Main Directions of Development of the Polish Armed Forces and Their Preparations for National Defence for the Years … ."

The "Main Directions of Development of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland…" are further detailed in the "Detailed Directions of Reconstruction and Technical Modernisation of the Armed Forces for the Years…", prepared by the MoND and adopted by a Council of Ministers resolution. Updated every four years, these documents define the key priorities, objectives, and development directions of the Armed Forces.

The "Main Directions…" and "Detailed Directions…" form the basis for the Minister of National Defence's order issuing the "Programme of Development of the Armed Forces for the Years…". This, in turn, guides the "Plan of Technical Modernisation of the Armed Forces…" (PMT), which consolidates all planned military equipment acquisitions within a specified timeframe. PMT outlines anticipated financial outlays for new equipment procurement, development projects, and long-term modernisation programmes.

The military equipment acquisition system serves as an executive component of the Polish Armed Forces' technical modernisation process. Its primary objective is the continuous enhancement of the PAF's operational potential. To this end, various measures are implemented to strengthen and upgrade combat capabilities. Technical modernisation, encompassing planning, organisational, and technical initiatives, ensures the PAF attains its intended operational readiness, safeguarding national security and fulfilling allied commitments.

The State Defence System distinguishes two interrelated concepts: defence planning and development planning. Defence planning shapes the system to define and achieve defence objectives, encompassing planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation, and operational planning. In parallel, development planning for Poland's Defence System sets long-term objectives and outlines necessary measures. These processes are further complemented by PAF development programming, as specified in the "Guidelines for Conducting the Review of Needs for Operational Capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland."

Within this process, PAF development programming is integral. It translates the objectives of the "Strategy for the Development of the National Security System of the Republic of Poland 2022" — as they pertain to the Polish Armed Forces—into actions for acquiring specific operational capabilities. These measures cover doctrine, organisation, training, technical modernisation, human resources, infrastructure, leadership, and interoperability. The final outcome is the "Programme for the Development of the Polish Armed Forces for the Years …."

The acquisition of new military equipment continues the PAF development programming process and follows the Equipment Requirements outlined in Decision No. 116/MON of 1 September 2021 (Decision No. 116/MON, 2021). This process includes analytical, planning, and implementation activities to introduce specified military equipment into service. It also covers selected life cycle stages, including the programming and planning of capability acquisition for the PAF.

This cyclical process involves a structured, multi-faceted analysis conducted during the Operational Capabilities Needs Review, which unfolds in two stages. First, the General Staff of the PAF identifies operational capability needs—such as strike and force protection—developing planning models and scenarios that consider emerging threats and future battlefield visions. Weaknesses and gaps are assessed, with proposals formulated to enhance or establish capabilities. In the second stage, the Armaments Agency reviews these models and scenarios, analysing requirements for each capability. Based on these findings, it recommends the necessary military equipment, outlined in the Equipment Requirements document, which serves as the basis for procurement.

The acquisition of military equipment follows the Plan of Technical Modernisation and established multi-year modernisation programmes, implemented under the Public Finance Act, the Homeland Defence Act, and the Act on the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR). Figure 2 illustrates the options for establishing these programmes.

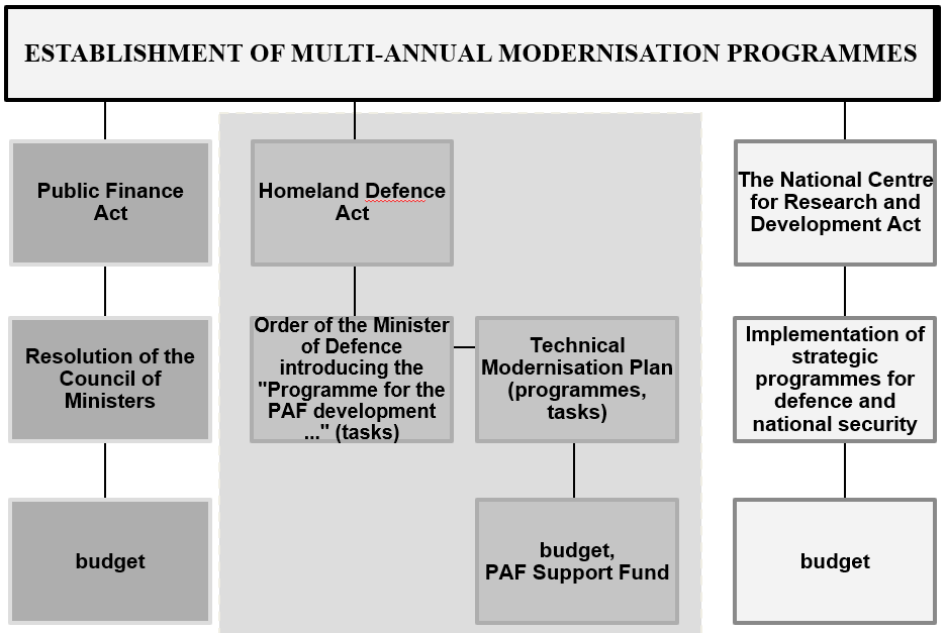

Fig. 2. Options for establishing multi-annual modernisation programmes
Source: own study

Article 136 of the Public Finance Act (27 August 2009, 2024) states that within annual expenditure limits, the Budget Act may set specific spending caps for multi--year modernisation programmes. The Council of Ministers establishes these programmes to implement adopted defence and security strategies and appoints the entity responsible for execution. The guidelines also allow for dividing programmes into stages and permit implementing entities to incur obligations annually up to the total allocated expenditure.

Funding for these initiatives comes primarily from the state budget, with potential additional contributions from the MoND. The Homeland Defence Act allows the Minister of National Defence to establish multi-year modernisation programmes by ordinance, integrating specific tasks into the "Programme for the Development of the Polish Armed Forces…". These tasks are then reflected in the PMT, funded by the MoND budget and the Armed Forces Support Fund. The NCBR Act further supports multi-year modernisation programmes, enabling strategic defence and security initiatives, financed by the state budget with MoND involvement, to be executed under a separate procedural framework.

Acquisition System in the Polish Armed Forces

The current military equipment acquisition system in the Polish Armed Forces is the product of over 20 years of experience and interaction with a broader systemic environment. A major challenge in this framework is the conduct of development works, which — unlike standard procurement — are not only more formalised but also lack a guarantee of success.

For years after Poland's NATO accession on 12 March 1999, the Armed Forces continued to follow Decision No. 78/MON of 29 May 1996, which outlined principles for planning, executing, accepting, and financing research, development, and implementation works in military technology. These guidelines remained in force long after Poland joined the Alliance. A significant shift occurred on 9 March 2005 with Decision No. 57/MON, introducing a new *Instruction on Conducting Development and Implementation Work in military technology and testing new models of armaments and equipment*. This formally aligned the acquisition system with NATO principles, focusing on operational capabilities rather than specific technical solutions. The military materiel life cycle was structured based on the *NATO Programme Management Framework – AAP-20* (2015), incorporating domestic adaptations such as urgent operational requirements and dedicated implementing structures.

The acquisition process was divided into two phases: development and implementation work. Additionally, the Armaments Market Analysis Bureau was established to prepare feasibility studies based on Operational Requirements identified by the General Staff of the PAF. To oversee acquisition and military materiel operations, an Armaments Council was introduced as a coordinating authority.

Decision No. 28/MON of 7 February 2011 restructured the military equipment acquisition system, dissolving the Armaments Market Analysis Bureau (its tasks were transferred to the Armament Inspectorate) and simplifying documentation by merging development and implementation procedures into a single "development work" category (Decision No. 28/MON, 2011).

This remained in force until 25 March 2013, when Decision No. 72/MON replaced it, introducing key changes. Most notably, it replaced the term "armaments and military materiel" with "military equipment", in line with the Defence Procurement Directive (Directive 2009/81/EC, 2009), and dissolved the Armaments Council (Decision No. 72/MON, 2013).

On 5 July 2017, Decision No. 141/MON was introduced to streamline the military equipment acquisition system, reducing procedural complexity and minimising document coordination among MoND institutions and units (Decision No. 141/MON, 2017). Figure 3 illustrates the timeline of acquisition system regulations.

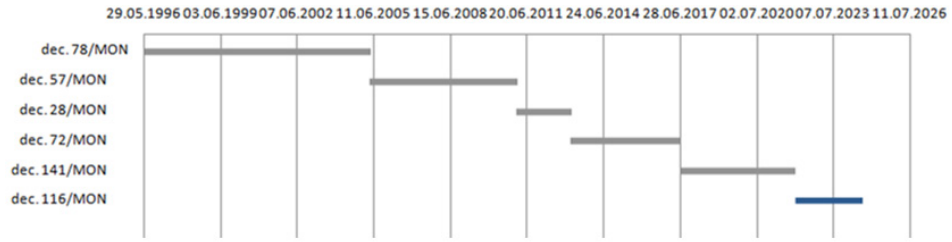

Fig. 3. List of acquisition system regulations applicable to the Polish Armed Forces In the years 1996 and 2024
Source: own study

The most recent binding regulation on the military equipment acquisition system in the PAF is Decision No. 116/MON of 1 September 2021, which defines procedures for acquiring new military equipment under standard processes and urgent operational requirements (Decision No. 116/MON, 2021). It also covers development work and procurement under the U.S. Foreign Military Financing programme. The decision applies to complete military systems, components, sub-assemblies, related technical materials, and extends to services, goods supply, and construction work directly linked to the acquired equipment.

This decision fundamentally changed the acquisition system by eliminating acquisition phases, reducing the analytical and conceptual component, and shifting from a capability-based to an equipment-based approach. As a result, the Equipment Requirements document replaced the former Operational Requirements. It also established the Technical Modernisation Council as an advisory body to the Minister of National Defence (Decision No. 117/MON, 2021).

Additionally, the AAP-20 stages no longer align with Decision No. 116/MON. The Pre-Concept and Concept stages have been merged, while the Development stage now distinguishes between Defining the Design Assumptions and Design and Development (Table 1). These modifications diverge from STANAG 4728, which promotes harmonised Life Cycle Management principles for Armaments Programmes (STANAG 4728, 2022).

The Minister of National Defence oversees PAF technical modernisation. The Operational Capabilities Needs Review initiates the military equipment acquisition process, after which the Head of the Armaments Agency prepares the Equipment Requirements document for approval by the Technical Modernisation Council.

Table 1. Stages of the military materiel lifecycle according to AAP-20 and Decision No. 116/MON of 2021

No.	Names of stages from AAP-20	Stages of the acquisition system in relation to Decision No 116/MON of 1 September 2021 ~~Phases~~
1.	Pre-Concept	Stages: 1. Identification of needs for operational capabilities. 2. Definition of military materiel requirements (Annex of the Feasibility Study). *No "reflection phase" - marginalisation of the analytical and conceptual works* *Feasibility Study?*
2.	Concept	
3.	Development	Stages: 3. Definition of design assumptions. 4. Design and development.
4.	Production	Stage: 6. Procurement.
5.	Utilization	*Taken from life cycle definition: use, repair, upgrading, modification, maintenance, logistics, training, testing; described in other legislation.*
6.	Support	
7.	Retirement	*Taken from life cycle definition: withdrawal and disposal; described in other legislation.*

Source: own study

As shown in Figure 4, Decision No. 116/MON categorises military equipment acquisition into new equipment, in-service equipment, and urgent operational requirements. The acquisition and withdrawal principles are further detailed in Decision No. 186/MON (2021). Based on the *Equipment Requirements*, the Polish Armed Forces employ four methods to acquire new equipment: direct procurement, development work, modernisation, and service provision. For in-service equipment, acquisition is typically restricted to replenishing stocks or procuring services. Under urgent operational requirements, any method used for new or in-service equipment is applicable, including purchasing new or pre-existing assets or contracting services.

In-service military equipment is acquired based on Technical Documentation or Catalogue Cards, while new equipment acquisition follows approved Equipment Requirements supporting development initiatives. Urgent operational acquisitions occur once the Minister of National Defence approves a request from the Chief of the General Staff of the PAF or a branch commander. The Technical Modernisation Council may also initiate acquisitions under urgent operational requirements regulations. Once the Minister approves a request specifying the equipment or its parameters, procurement proceeds, provided the task is included in the Central Material Plan (Decision No. 118/MON, 2021).

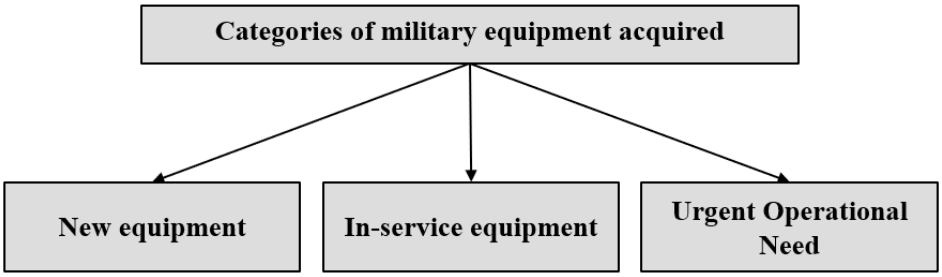

Fig. 4. Categories of military equipment to be acquired in accordance with Decision No. 116/MON of 2021

Source: own study

In-service military equipment is acquired based on *Technical Documentation* or *Catalogue Cards*, while new equipment acquisition follows approved *Equipment Requirements*, forming the basis for development-focused initiatives. The process consists of two stages: *Definition of Design Assumptions*, involving the preparation of a *Conceptual Design*, and *Design and Development*, which includes creating preliminary and technical designs, producing and verifying a prototype, and finalising *Product Technical Documentation*.

Within this framework, the Definition of Design Assumptions stage requires the contractor to produce three key documents. The *Conceptual Design* defines the proposed technical solution, including system specifications validated through analysis, modelling, and testing. The *Technical-Economic Analysis* assesses economic feasibility and implementation factors. Finally, the *Draft Tactical-Technical Requirements*, prepared per NO-06-A101, specify essential technical and operational parameters, interoperability, and integration within the operational environment.

Once the *Conceptual Design Assessment* is approved by the Head of the Armaments Agency, the *Tactical-Technical Requirements* are finalised, and sufficient funds are allocated in the central resource plan, the *Design and Development* stage begins. This phase involves creating and verifying a prototype to ensure compliance with the Tactical-Technical Requirements.

The *Preliminary Design* substage involves preparing design documentation, developing a working model or key components, conducting analyses, and testing the model. Based on these outcomes, the *Technical Design* substage refines the prototype by developing *Prototype Technical Documentation*, fabricating the prototype, and recording results from *Preliminary* and *Qualification Tests*. Once completed, the *Product Technical Documentation* finalises the *Design and Development* stage. The process concludes with successful qualification tests and a formal statement confirming completion, which serves as the basis for acquiring the developed military equipment.

Alongside Decision No. 116/MON, the PAF follow a separate regulation for military equipment acquisition by the Cyberspace Defence Component Command, outlined in Decision No. 10/MON of 1 March 2024, covering information technology, cryptology, and cybersecurity (Decision No. 10/MON, 2024). The Special Forces Component Command also holds the authority to bypass Decision No. 116/MON for decentralised procurement, reflecting its distinct operational needs. Additionally, a separate regulation for the Armed Forces Support Inspectorate is under legislative review.

Identification of challenges and possible directions for changes in the military equipment acquisition system

Over the past 20 years, military acquisition system issues have been addressed through organisational and competency improvements, including reducing mandatory participants in the acquisition process (Decision No. 116/MON, 2021) and aligning European Defence Fund resources with national modernisation to enhance synergy, resource optimisation, and interoperability (Decision No. 127/MON, 2023). These changes have shortened processes and clarified responsibilities. However, despite these improvements, the system remains hindered by a lack of a systematic approach, with institutional and stakeholder priorities often taking precedence, further complicating its functionality.

- Each modification to the system has not only revealed new issues but also exacerbated existing ones. From the Authors' perspective, the most critical challenges include:
- The dominance of "military equipment" in acquisition terminology narrows the process to an equipment-focused rather than capability-based approach. To realign with defence capabilities, the Polish Armed Forces should reinstate a capability-oriented mindset and adopt the term "defence capability acquisition system in the PAF." A key step in this shift would be restoring the *Operational Requirements* document, which was replaced by the *Equipment Requirements* document. Notably, the operational capability approach is already used in defence task monitoring (Pawella, 2023).
- The lack of a standardised life cycle model for military equipment, aligned with NATO standards (STANAG 4728, AAP-20, AAP-48), remains a critical shortfall. The Life Cycle Model Management process aims to standardise key elements, yet eliminating distinct acquisition phases and reducing analytical and conceptual components hinder efficiency, effectiveness, and NATO alignment.
- Parallel acquisition processes in the Cyberspace Defence Component Command and Special Forces, despite similar procurement procedures,

create unnecessary fragmentation in the military acquisition system. Such tendencies further undermine coherence and efficiency.

- Frequent regulatory changes in military acquisition over the past two decades have undermined stability and predictability. While some amendments simplify procedures, regulatory volatility prevents the establishment of consistent principles and best practices. The legal framework, from statutory acts to internal guidelines, often lacks coherence, impacting both acquisition and supporting activities such as classified information protection, intellectual property management, and quality assessment. The unique requirements and long life cycles of military equipment further complicate regulatory alignment.
- Poland's failure to ratify STANAG 4728 hinders a systematic approach to military acquisition modernisation and NATO alignment. The current system lacks a holistic, program-oriented model, focusing on equipment rather than capabilities, limiting efficiency and long-term value for money, that is meant for all military systems, including logistics (Brzeziński, 2024). Ratification would enable a programmatic acquisition model, integrating projects of varying complexities and improving resource allocation. Key reforms should include clear responsibility allocation, R&D integration, enhanced project portfolio management, and advanced technology transfers. A major challenge is the shortage of systems engineering experts to oversee these processes, requiring expanded training and institutional expertise. Additionally, modernising acquisition through an integrated IT system and specialised career development would ensure alignment with international best practices and support defence modernisation. This would also smooth the future implementation process of advanced architectures, like artificial intelligence (Sokołowski et al., 2024) and internet of things (Pawlisiak and Maslii, 2024).
- The lack of a comprehensive legislative and organisational framework for Poland's armaments policy undermines its strategic effectiveness. While the *Strategy for Responsible Development to 2020 (with a perspective to 2030)* (Council of Ministers, 2017) identified industrial development, R&D, international cooperation, and military acquisition as key policy dimensions, mechanisms to implement these objectives remain absent. This weakens efforts to protect the national defence industry and align procurement with long-term security goals. Key areas needing attention include harmonised legal provisions for state security interests, structured defence capability programmes, and guidelines for bilateral/multilateral cooperation, covering co-production, joint R&D, technology transfer (offsets, licences, joint projects), shared procurement (NSPA, bilateral, multilateral), innovation, and subcontracting. Developing detailed action plans under the armaments policy framework would strengthen international partnerships and sustain defence capability growth.

Conclusions

This article examined challenges in Poland's military equipment acquisition system, focusing on its alignment with modern defence objectives and NATO standards. The research assessed the effectiveness of the current framework in supporting PAF operational capabilities within technical modernisation efforts. Guided by the hypothesis that systemic and procedural barriers undermine efficiency, the findings confirm that, despite two decades of progress, significant obstacles persist.

A key issue is the equipment-focused rather than capability-driven approach, limiting strategic flexibility. This is compounded by the absence of a unified life cycle model, regulatory inconsistencies, and fragmentation from parallel procurement processes. Moreover, Poland's failure to ratify STANAG 4728 perpetuates inefficiencies by neglecting holistic life cycle cost management.

Frequent, inconsistent regulatory changes further destabilise the system, hindering the development of best practices. Additionally, the lack of an integrated armaments policy disrupts the alignment of industrial, R&D, and international cooperation objectives.

To address these challenges, Poland must implement a capability-based acquisition model, ratify STANAG 4728, and stabilise legal frameworks. Strengthening systems engineering expertise and adopting programmatic approaches would enhance efficiency, aligning acquisition processes with NATO standards and reinforcing PAF operational potential.

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