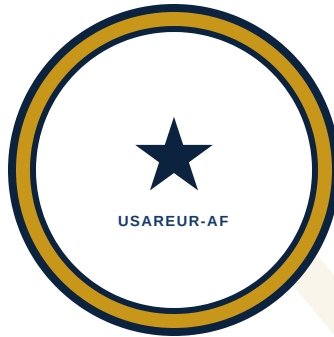


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CONCEPTS GUIDE

EXEC



CONCEPTS GUIDE — EXEC: SENIOR LEADER EXECUTIVE COURSE

Maven Smart System (MSS) — USAREUR-AF

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY EUROPE AND AFRICA
(USAREUR-AF)
Wiesbaden, Germany

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CONCEPTS GUIDE — EXEC: SENIOR LEADER EXECUTIVE COURSE

MAVEN SMART SYSTEM (MSS) — USAREUR-AF

Forward: Read this before attending EXEC. It establishes the conceptual framework for how data-driven operations work at the senior leader level — why the platform exists, what it means for your formation, and what the command expects from leaders who own the data posture of their organizations. This is not a technical document. It is a leadership document. **Prereqs:** None. Operational experience at the O-5 / E-9+ level is assumed. **Purpose:** Prepare senior leaders to engage productively with EXEC content from the first hour. *HQ USAREUR-AF · v1.0 · 2026 · DISTRIB: USG only · AUTH: C2DAO/UDRA v1.1*

1. THE DATA ENVIRONMENT HAS CHANGED

1-1. What Changed

The Army has always been a data-intensive organization. What changed is not the data — it is the speed, volume, and integration. A decade ago, operational data lived in stovepipe systems accessed by specialists. Today, MSS integrates data from dozens of Army systems into a single platform where any authorized user can see their formation's posture in near-real-time.

This changes three things for senior leaders:

1. **Visibility is no longer gated by staff capacity.** A readiness dashboard updates continuously. You no longer wait for the S4 to compile a spreadsheet.
2. **Data products replace verbal reports as the primary information vehicle.** The weekly BUB slide is now a snapshot of a living dashboard. If you are only seeing data at the BUB, you are seeing it too late.
3. **Data quality is now visible.** When information lived in spreadsheets, errors were invisible until they caused a problem. On a shared platform, bad data is visible to everyone — including your higher headquarters.

1-2. What Did Not Change

- **Command authority over information.** You still decide what information matters, what gets reported, and what drives decisions. The platform is a tool, not a replacement for judgment.
- **The requirement for analytical rigor.** More data does not mean better decisions. It means more opportunity for bad data to masquerade as good data. Critical thinking is more important, not less.
- **Human accountability.** Someone is responsible for every piece of data on the platform. Knowing who that is — and holding them accountable — is a command function.

2. DATA AS COMBAT POWER

2-1. The Doctrinal Frame

ADP 3-13 (Information) establishes information as a joint function and combat power. ADP 6-0 (Mission Command) and ADP 5-0 (The Operations Process) place the commander at the center of the operations process — understanding, directing, and assessing through continuous information flow. These are not metaphors. In the European theater, the ability to see your formation's readiness, logistics posture, and operational status faster than your adversary can disrupt it is a direct contributor to decision advantage.

The CG USAREUR-AF has been explicit: the command that masters its data first wins. MSS is the instrument. But the instrument is only as effective as the leaders who wield it.

2-2. What Decision Advantage Looks Like

Decision advantage in the data context means:

- **You see problems before they become crises.** A readiness trend that shows gradual decline over 30 days is visible on a dashboard. It is not visible in a weekly verbal report until someone decides to mention it.
- **You act on verified information, not estimates.** When your S4 says "we think we have enough Class IX for the exercise," you can ask: "Show me the MSS data." If the data supports the assessment, proceed. If it does not, adjust.
- **You share a common operating picture with subordinate and higher HQs.** When everyone reads from the same platform, the coordination cost of aligning information drops dramatically.

2-3. What Happens Without It

Formations without effective data posture: - Brief from conflicting spreadsheets maintained by different staff sections - Discover readiness shortfalls at the last possible moment - Cannot answer higher HQ RFIs without multi-day staff drills - Rely on individual knowledge that walks out the door at PCS - Duplicate effort because nobody knows what has already been built

3. THE AGILE MINDSET FOR SENIOR LEADERS

3-1. Why Data Projects Are Different

Traditional Army project management follows a plan-resource-execute-assess cycle. This works for construction, equipment fielding, and regulatory compliance. It does not work well for data projects because:

- **Requirements emerge through iteration.** The commander often cannot fully articulate what they need until they see a first version. That is not a failure of planning — it is the nature of data work.
- **The cost of change is low.** Modifying a dashboard takes hours, not months. Agile leverages this by building in short cycles and incorporating feedback continuously.
- **Value is delivered incrementally.** A partially complete dashboard that answers one question is more useful today than a comprehensive dashboard delivered in three months.

3-2. What Agile Asks of Senior Leaders

Agile does not ask you to learn software development. It asks you to:

1. **Engage early and often.** Review products at the end of each sprint (every 1–2 weeks). Your feedback is the input that drives the next sprint.
2. **Tolerate imperfection.** The first version will be rough. That is by design. Reject it only if it answers the wrong question — not because it is incomplete.
3. **Prioritize ruthlessly.** Your builders can do three things well or ten things poorly. Tell them which three matter most.
4. **Accept the roadmap over the POAM.** A roadmap says "here is where we are going, in order of priority, with near-term commitments and far-term direction." A POAM says "here is every task and date." For data work, the roadmap is honest and the POAM is fiction.

3-3. The Roadmap Mental Model

Think of a data roadmap like a movement order:

- **Now (Phase I):** We are committed. This is the sprint the team is executing. Specific deliverables, specific timelines.
- **Next (Phase II):** We are planned. This work is scoped and ready to start when Phase I completes. Details are solid but may adjust.
- **Later (Phase III+):** We are aware. This is directional. We know it needs to happen but the specifics depend on what we learn in Phases I and II.

A senior leader's role is to validate the priorities across these horizons, not to define the tasks within each sprint.

4. LEADING DATA PROFESSIONALS

4-1. A Different Kind of Soldier

Data professionals — whether military, Civilian, or contractor — are problem-solvers who build. Their output is a product, not a brief. They think in systems, not slides. They value clarity of intent over prescriptive direction.

This does not make them difficult to lead. It makes them responsive to mission-type orders: give them the problem, the constraints, and the priority. Let them determine the solution.

4-2. What Motivates Them

Motivator	How to Leverage It
Solving real problems	Connect their work to the operational problem it solves. "The CG needs theater readiness visibility by Friday" is more motivating than "build a dashboard"
Seeing their work used	Make sure they know when their products are used in decisions. Feedback — positive or corrective — is fuel
Technical growth	Support the training pipeline. A SL 2 builder who is blocked from attending SL 3 is a builder who plateaus
Autonomy in execution	Define the problem and the constraints. Do not define the implementation unless you have the technical knowledge to do so
Recognition	Data work is invisible when it works. Make it visible. A builder whose dashboard prevented a Class IX crisis deserves the same recognition as a mechanic who fixed the vehicle

4-3. What Demotivates Them

- Being tasked with additional duties that consume their build time
- Building products that nobody looks at or provides feedback on
- Being told exactly how to build something by someone who does not understand the platform
- Having their technical recommendations overridden without explanation
- Being treated as IT support rather than operational enablers

4-4. The Right Conversation

When engaging with data professionals:

Start with the problem, not the solution. "I need to see which units are at risk of failing their readiness gate for the exercise" gives the builder room to design the right product. "Build me a spreadsheet that lists equipment by unit" locks them into a format that may not be the best answer.

Ask what they need. Builders are often blocked by access issues, unclear requirements, or competing priorities. A 5-minute conversation with the commander can unblock a week of work.

Check in at sprint boundaries. See the product at the end of each sprint. Give feedback. Adjust priorities. This is the senior leader's role in the agile loop.

5. WHAT THE PLATFORM ACTUALLY DOES — CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

5-1. The Five-Layer Stack

MSS is built on a five-layer architecture. You do not need to know how each layer works. You need to know that each layer exists because problems at one layer affect everything above it.

5. Applications / AI (AIP)	← What you and your staff see
4. Transformation	← Where raw data becomes useful
3. Storage & Modeling	← How data is organized
2. Ingestion	← How data gets in
1. Source Systems	← GCSS-A, DCPDS, MEDPROS, etc.

The key insight: A problem at Layer 1 (source system stops sending data) makes everything above it wrong — but the dashboard at Layer 5 will still look fine until someone asks "when was this last updated?" That question is your most powerful diagnostic tool.

5-2. Key Platform Capabilities

Capability	What It Does	Senior Leader Relevance
Workshop	Drag-and-drop application builder — dashboards, forms, tables	This is where most of your formation's data products live
Contour	Flexible data analysis — slice, filter, aggregate	This is how your staff answers ad hoc questions
Quiver (Object Explorer)	Examines individual records and relationships	This is how someone traces a data point back to its source
Pipelines	Automated data flows from source to destination	This is the plumbing — you will not see it, but when it breaks, you will feel it
AIP	AI assistant — queries data, generates summaries	Powerful but requires human validation. AI outputs are drafts, not products
Ontology	The data model — defines what types of things exist and how they relate	This is the most consequential design decision on the platform. It determines what questions are easy to answer and what questions are impossible

5-3. What You Will See in the Course

During EXEC, the instructor will walk through a live MSS environment. You will observe:

- A Workshop dashboard answering a readiness question — and how it can mislead if not built well
- A Contour analysis answering an ad hoc commander's query
- An AIP interaction — what the AI gets right, what it gets wrong, and why human validation is non-negotiable
- A data quality example — the same metric shown correctly and incorrectly, and how to tell the difference

You will not be asked to operate any of these tools. You are observing so you understand what your staff works with and what to expect from their products.

6. PREPARING FOR THE COURSE

6-1. What to Read

This Concepts Guide is the only required pre-reading.

Recommended (not required): - CG_GUIDANCE.md — Public statements from the CG on data and decision advantage - DATA_LITERACY_technical_reference, Chapter 1 — If you want additional context on data fundamentals

6-2. What to Bring

- Questions. The course is interactive. The instructor expects senior leaders to challenge, question, and push back.
- Your formation's current data products in mind. You will be asked to think about what your staff produces and whether it meets your needs.
- An open mind about agile practices. They work differently from traditional Army project management. The course will explain why.

6-3. What to Expect

A 1-day, instructor-led session. No practical exercise. No exam. The assessment is organizational — what you do with the knowledge after the course determines success.

The course will move quickly. It assumes you can process information at a senior level. It will not belabor points or repeat material. If something is unclear, ask during the session.

REFERENCES

Governing Doctrine:

- ADP 3-13, Information
- ADP 5-0, The Operations Process
- ADP 6-0, Mission Command
- AR 25-1, Army Information Technology (Jul 2019)
- AR 350-1, Army Training and Leader Development
- FM 7-0, Training

Strategic References (not doctrine):

- DoD Data Strategy (October 2020)
 - Army Data Plan (2022)
 - Army Cloud Plan (2022)
 - Army CIO Data Stewardship Policy (April 2, 2024)
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