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# 1 Identification and Assessment of Obsolescence in the Early Stages of System Design

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8 **Abstract** possesses the required level of performance. The objectives of this article are twofold. First, it is intended to  
9 Obsolescence is the fact that an entity (physical or logical) is becoming outdated or no longer  
10 contribute to the understanding of obsolescence propagation. Secondly, two supporting approaches for the  
11 Identification and Assessment phases are proposed: the House of Obsolescence and the System Obsoles-  
12 cence Criticality Analysis. The former allows the mapping of obsolescence propagation via dependencies,  
13 whether imposed changes are desired or imposed, by external actors to the system architecture. Whereas,  
14 the objective of the latter is to assign an obsolescence criticality index to the identified risks in order to  
15 prioritize them for solution or mitigation determination during the analysis phase. The tools make extensive  
16 use of the modeled system knowledge through the application of Systems Engineering. The application of  
17 these approaches is presented through an illustrative study.

18 **Keywords:** Systems Engineering, Obsolescence management process, Identification, Assessment, House  
19 of Obsolescence, Obsolescence Criticality Index.

## 20 1. Introduction

21 Progressively obsolescence is becoming a topic that is discussed more and more. Obsolescence can be  
22 defined as a normal and natural phenomenon. Often consumers suspect about planned obsolescence, fearing  
23 that companies artificially reduce the effective service life of products forcing consumers to replace them,  
24 as stated by (Bulow, 1986; Kreziak, Prim-Allaz, & Robinot, 2017). According to the international standard  
25 (IEC-62402, 2019), obsolescence is the “transition from availability from the original manufacturer to un-  
26 availability”. Many technical, financial, legal or technological drivers may be hidden behind this transition  
27 process. For example, new computers are not sold with Windows 7, although there might be a specific  
28 market niche maybe interested in computers with this operating system. Microsoft announced on January  
29 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 that the support for Windows 7 was ending (Windows end of support notice), which made this  
30 operating system obsolete hence not suitable for sale. Ending support does not mean that computers with

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31 this operating system will cease to function, but it means that no evolution of the functionalities or protec-  
32 tion will be proposed in the future, which could open the door to security breaches. As a result, computers  
33 running under Windows 7 may see degraded performance or decreased availability, and as such this ending  
34 of support is a driver for obsolescence. Such systems would increasingly have degraded performances, and  
35 no longer be able to comply with system requirements more specifically security requirements which means  
36 it will be hard to maintain or may soon stop operating, as underlined by (Zheng, Sandborn, Terpenny, &  
37 Orfi, 2014).

38 Understanding the obsolescence phenomenon and its propagation mechanisms is essential for an ob-  
39 solescence management plan. From a cost avoidance point of view proactive obsolescence management  
40 approaches have proven to be very effective in comparison to reactive approaches (SD-22, 2021). Proactive  
41 approaches at the same time appear to support one of the main objective of Systems Engineering “to design  
42 and develop a system that can be maintained effectively, safely, in the least amount of time, at least cost  
43 and with a minimum expenditure of support resources without adversely affecting the mission of that sys-  
44 tem” (Walden, Roedler, Forsberg, Hamelin, & Shortell, 2015). The objective of this paper is to propose two  
45 supporting approaches for the identification and assessment phases of an obsolescence management plan.  
46 These approaches are the House of Obsolescence (HOO) and the System Obsolescence Criticality Analysis.  
47 HOO allows the study of obsolescence propagation, whether desired or imposed, by external actors to the  
48 system architecture. Whereas, the objective of the latter is to assign an obsolescence criticality index to the  
49 identified risks in order to prioritize them for solution or mitigation determination during the analysis phase.  
50 The correct manner to address obsolescence risks is from the early stages of system design.

51 The current paper addresses the understanding and modelling of obsolescence propagation. The un-  
52 derstanding and modelling of obsolescence and the propagation of its consequences are addressed by link-  
53 ing obsolescence to the fundamental concepts of systems engineering. The stakeholder requirements of a  
54 system-of-interest (SOI) and the components are not all at the same level of risk to obsolescence and are not  
55 all sensitive at the same degree to the obsolescence occurrence. Two tools are proposed for obsolescence  
56 management of a SOI during the identification and assessment phase. They use results in a quantification of  
57 this risk for each component and function identified as critical by the experts of the system.

58 The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the concepts related to obsolescence and the  
59 propagation of the consequences of obsolescence through the system architecture. To this purpose, some  
60 fundamental concepts of systems engineering as well as the channels for propagating the consequences of  
61 obsolescence will be highlighted through the system models. Section 3 then details the proposal of tools  
62 for the identification and assessment phase of the obsolescence management of the SOI. These concepts are  
63 illustrated in section 4 through an example of a weather forecasting system taken from (Roques, 2017). The  
64 article concludes with a discussion of the results obtained and future work.

## 65 2. Related Work

66 In this section, some of the basic elements behind this study are presented. Starting with a description  
67 of what obsolescence is about and different manners of classification. Then the attention is turned to sys-  
68 tems engineering and model-based systems engineering, so to see where and how obsolescence can have  
69 its impact and where and how potential solution approaches could be incorporated. Finally, requirements  
70 engineering is discussed, field in which the authors see a good starting point can be found for addressing  
71 obsolescence, right from the earliest design phases. This section ends with a conclusion on the identified  
72 challenges and how they can be brought to a more holistic approach building on the presented basic ele-  
73 ments.

## 74 2.1. Obsolescence

75 Obsolescence is a state in which a piece of equipment becomes no longer useful or/and out-of-date,  
76 whether form or function-wise. Obsolescence is situationally dependent, the underlying causes for an item  
77 to become obsolescent according to (SD-22, 2021) are: technology (newer technology is preferred), function  
78 (no longer functions as intended), regulation (changes in regulation), supportability (an item becomes no  
79 longer supportable) or market demand (there is no more demand for the product). (Bartels, Ermel, Sandborn,  
80 & Pecht, 2012) provides a categorization for obsolescence which is discussed in the following subsection.

81 Some principal drivers for obsolescence are:

- 82 ○ technology advancements (Merola, 2006) – new products appear replacing old ones,
- 83 ○ lack of support from vendors (Merola, 2006) – the organization is forced to modify their product to  
84 obtain the necessary updates,
- 85 ○ merger and acquisition of a business (Bradley & Dawson, 1998) – the acquired organization may  
86 have to change its existing system, if it is not compatible with the other system used in the acquiring  
87 organization,
- 88 ○ many authors agree on that the “root cause of obsolescence issues in systems and products is the  
89 mismatch of the system and the components or parts lifecycles” (Zolghadri, Addouche, Boissie, &  
90 Richard, 2018).
- 91 ○ changes in regulations (SD-22, 2021).

92 According to (EDSTAR, 2016), the objective of obsolescence management is to ensure that obsoles-  
93 cence is managed as an integral part of design, development, production and in-service support in order to  
94 minimize cost and detrimental impact throughout the product life cycle. This is a non-trivial task, as in the  
95 design stage many decisions are made that affect the complete lifecycle of a product or service, at which  
96 time the designers only have (very) incomplete information at hand and rely mainly on assumptions and  
97 models’ outputs.

98 Obsolescence and its effects can be described according to three fundamental characteristics:

- 99 (1). The first is that obsolescence has fundamentally delayed effects. Referring back to the Windows 7  
100 example, the end of support will not make the computers stop running; the decreased performance will  
101 for instance only start to be “felt” by users when security issues start to arrive. This time delay is a key  
102 factor in the design of monitoring techniques in systems obsolescence management, as for example,  
103 the failure or non-availability of a system containing an obsolete component may not materialize until  
104 well beyond its detection (real and proven). But the obsolete component would not function at the  
105 expected performance level.
- 106 (2). The second characteristic is that obsolescence can affect elements at any level in the system structure  
107 hierarchy. “Issues are not confined to piece parts or devices; obsolescence may occur at the part,  
108 module, component, equipment, or system level” (SD-22, 2021).
- 109 (3). The third characteristic concerns the propagation of the consequences of the occurrence of obsoles-  
110 cence. Obsolescence is not a confined event because obsolete or near-term obsolescence elements  
111 might interact with others which can prevent the system from fulfilling its internal processes. There-  
112 fore, the consequences of obsolescence, if not properly solved, may propagate in the same level as-  
113 sembly, to the Next-Higher Assembly (NHA) or the entire system. Obsolescence propagates due to  
114 existing dependencies between entities of the system architecture. It is therefore essential to have  
115 a precise mapping of all system dependencies. It is exactly to achieve this objective that systems  
116 engineering, via a structured model based systems engineering approach (see section 2.4), provides  
117 essential help in managing obsolescence.

118 To manage obsolescence, (SD-22, 2021) defines a process that includes the following steps: prepare,  
119 identify, assess, analyze and implement. During the preparation phase, it is required to develop an obsolescence  
120 management plan to be able to track obsolescence cases. Then the identification phase includes the  
121 monitoring and surveillance of emerging obsolescence issues. Afterwards the assessment of obsolescence  
122 impact is performed during the assessment phase. Accordingly, during the analysis, a set of potential resolu-  
123 tions for the critical items has to be established under cost-effectiveness constraints. Finally, the solutions  
124 have to be implemented.

125 This paper focuses on the identification and assessment of obsolescence for the early product/service  
126 design stages and suggests an approach that allows the prioritization of obsolescence issues.

## 127 2.2. Obsolescence Classification

128 Obsolescence issues may be distinguished based on a voluntary (or planned, see (Bulow, 1986; Kreziak  
129 et al., 2017)) or involuntarily action of a company. Some obsolescence classifications refer to this action as  
130 the “reason or origin” of the obsolescence. Bartels et al. (2012) defines four classes of drivers:

- 131 (1). Logistical – inability to procure,
- 132 (2). Functional – the current product function, performance, or reliability becomes obsolete,
- 133 (3). Technological – advancement, and
- 134 (4). Functionality improvement dominated obsolescence – generated to remain competitive in the market.

135 Logistical obsolescence is a classification concerned about the availability of parts from their original  
136 manufacturer, best known as Diminishing Manufacturing Origins and Material Shortages (DMSMS). The  
137 holistic view on obsolescence goes beyond just the availability of a component from its supplier.

138 Another classification, proposed by (Wilkinson, 2015), distinguishes two origins of obsolescence:

- 139 (1). Supply side, and
- 140 (2). Demand side and regulation-caused.

141 Moreover, in his study on obsolescence and lifecycle management for avionics, (Wilkinson, 2015) sug-  
142 gests an obsolescence fishbone diagram that considers four obsolescence drivers:

- 143 (1). Software design (airspace requirements, commercial off-the-shelve software),
- 144 (2). Systems design (airspace requirements, assurance standards, regulations),
- 145 (3). Hardware manufacturing and repair (process, plant, components/sub-assemblies/materials, environ-  
146 mental legislations, component manufacturers), and
- 147 (4). Design tools (application, platforms and operating systems).

148 Finally, (SD-22, 2021) proposes a distinction based on the types of impacted items which are subdivided  
149 into:

- 150 (1). Software,
- 151 (2). Hardware-electronic, and
- 152 (3). Hardware – Materials and Structural, Mechanical, and Electrical (MaSME) items.

153 Hardware-electronic items may become obsolete for example because of low demand, demand for new  
154 technologies, or loss of repair support expertise. Software issues are due to newer versions of the software,  
155 support termination or because of mergers and acquisitions. Hardware-MaSME obsolescence issues may  
156 be due to regulations on hazardous materials, suppliers exiting business, or unavailable tooling. When  
157 proactively trying to identify potential obsolescence issues during the early design stages, these issues need  
158 to be taken into account.

### 159 2.3. Systems Engineering

160 Systems engineering is defined by the INCOSE (the International Council on Systems Engineering) as  
 161 an “interdisciplinary approach and means to enable the realization of successful systems. It focusses on  
 162 defining customer needs and required functionality early in the development cycle, documenting require-  
 163 ments, and then proceeding with design synthesis and system validation while considering the complete  
 164 problem: operations, cost and schedule, performance, training and support, test, manufacturing, and dis-  
 165 posal. Systems engineering considers both the business and the technical needs of all customers with the  
 166 goal of providing a quality product that meets the user needs” (Walden et al., 2015).

167 Current systems engineering approaches define how the different lifecycle stages are sequenced, in-  
 168 cluding different models based on linear (e.g. waterfall model, V-model), iterative (e.g. spiral model) or  
 169 evolutionary approaches (e.g. set-based approaches), while assuming that customer requirements are fixed  
 170 throughout the system’s lifecycle. In reality, this is not the case, neither stated needs nor desires from stake-  
 171 holders are constant throughout the systems lifecycle (Walden et al., 2015). Several standards trace down  
 172 the state of the art of systems engineering, of which today the ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288 (ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288,  
 173 2015)) is the main standard in use, accompanied by guides of best practices, such as the INCOSE Systems  
 174 Engineering Handbook (Walden et al., 2015) or the Systems Engineering Body of Knowledge (SEBOK,  
 175 2015). In this paper, systems are understood to be man-made, created, and utilized artefacts that need to  
 176 provide services in defined environments for the benefit of users and other stakeholders –integrated sets of  
 177 elements, subsystems, or assemblies that accomplish defined objectives.

178 As defined in the standard (ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288, 2015), six generic lifecycle stages can be distin-  
 179 guished, including a Concept Stage. The concept stage identifies the needs of the stakeholders, explores  
 180 concepts, identifies enabling technologies, and proposes viable and feasible solutions. Problems identified  
 181 in this phase, for example for individual hardware parts or software modules, should be addressed early  
 182 so to minimize the risk that in the end these entities fall short of the required functionality or performance  
 183 (Walden et al., 2015), (Brazier, van Langen, Lukosch, & Vingerhoeds, 2018), or that they are at risk for  
 184 obsolescence. As such, the concept stage is an important phase to consider when addressing proactive and  
 185 strategic management of obsolescence.

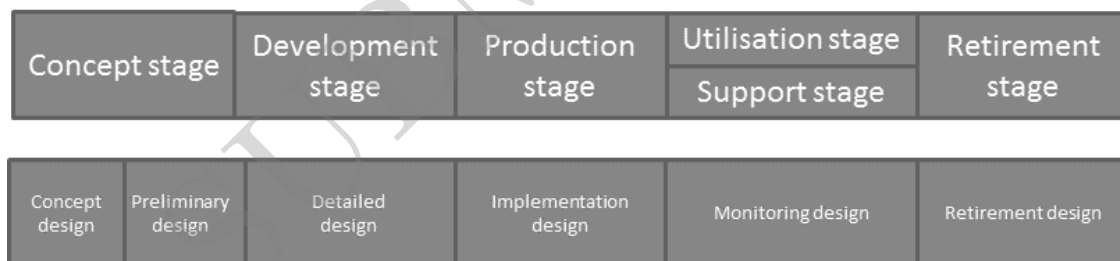


Fig. 1. Design activities per life cycle stage, adopted from (Brazier et al., 2018).

186 Fig. 1 refines the concept stage by dividing it into concept design and preliminary design. The concept  
 187 design stage has three main objectives (Brazier et al., 2018):

- 188 (1). To interpret/understand a mission statement, supported by a positive (potential) business case,
- 189 (2). To produce an initial definition of stakeholder requirements and key performance indicators with  
 190 respect to the mission,
- 191 (3). To produce an initial logical/conceptual description of a design.

192 The authors believe that this phase is by excellence the phase where proactive management of obsolescence  
 193 should start.

## 194 2.4. Model Based Systems Engineering

195 Model-Based Systems Engineering (MBSE) is a successful approach to support system requirement,  
196 design, analysis, verification and validation activities, beginning in the conceptual design phase and contin-  
197 uing throughout development and later life cycle phases (Kaslow, Ayres, Cahill, & Hart, 2018). Models are  
198 used to represent the systems and enable to better master the design and the verification of complex systems  
199 (Hick, Bajzek, & Faustmann, 2019).

200 Several languages are used for MBSE. Supported by the Object Management Group since 2006, SysML,  
201 the System Modelling Language (ISO/IEC-19514, 2017), is commonly used in systems engineering to ana-  
202 lyze, model and design systems. It is a diagrammatic modelling language for systems engineering, widely  
203 used in industry and at the moment its second version is being prepared for release over the coming years  
204 (SysML-V2, 2020). It is important to note that the SysML standard defines a notation, but not a way of  
205 using it. Methods have to be defined to make the use of the diagrams explicit, and to express a dedicated  
206 methodology conforming to the approach deployed.

207 Other approaches include the Object Process Methodology (OPM) (Dori, 2016; ISO/IEC-19514, 2017),  
208 with an increasing popularity, and the Architecture Analysis & Design Integrated Approach (ARCADIA)  
209 (Roques, 2017), a systems engineering methodology developed by Thales, but now more widely spread in  
210 numerous companies. The essential difference between OPM and ARCADIA on one hand and SysML on  
211 the other hand, is that the former two have associated a methodology to the syntax. Both try to achieve bet-  
212 ter structuring systems engineering approaches, while remaining fully compliant with systems engineering  
213 standards.

## 214 2.5. System Requirements

215 At the beginning of a development, stakeholders express their needs and wishes, that in an iterative  
216 process of clarifications, discussions and information exchanges become requirements (Brazier et al., 2018).  
217 Gero (1990) suggested that three types of requirements exist, functional, behavioral, and structural. More  
218 precisely, functional requirements state functions that a system must provide and are directly related to the  
219 mission of a system, its purpose; behavioral requirements specify desired system behavior of a design with  
220 respect to its mission, together with key performance indicators with which this behavior can be determined,  
221 the way the system acts; and structural requirements define requirements for components/sub-systems of a  
222 system. Each of these categories has a unique contribution to the design and development process. For  
223 example, the functional requirements correspond in a first step to the system capabilities that the designer  
224 needs to address.

225 An important step in system development is therefore the understanding and translation of stakeholder  
226 needs and desires into functional, structural, and behavioral requirements. In the requirements elicitation  
227 method, these needs and desires analysis approach helps to integrally address the requirements of the stake-  
228 holders. It could be performed iteratively and recursively at the different levels of the system as some  
229 components of the system are systems themselves that need a complete design process on which a systems  
230 engineering approach should be also applied.

231 Within the framework of analyzing the impact of obsolescence, functional requirements and structural  
232 requirements are first targets. Functional requirements target the different functionalities that a (sub-) system  
233 needs to fulfill. Structural requirements may impose (parts of) solutions and therewith certain components.  
234 As such, these requirements have a direct impact on obsolescence analysis.

235 During the early design phases, in particular in the concept stage, the requirements are iteratively refined,  
236 reworked and transformed into a functional architecture, leading to system specifications for the system, its  
237 sub-systems and eventually components.

238 Proven or anticipated obsolescence because of changes in requirements and/or component availability,

239 for example, may lead to non-compliance with specifications of the system, its sub-systems and/or some  
240 components, for instance:

- 241     ○ Such obsolescence may prevent the execution of the expected functionalities (e.g. impossibility to  
242         predict the weather),
- 243     ○ Such obsolescence may degrade the quality of the execution of these functionalities (e.g. exceeding  
244         the response time),
- 245     ○ Such obsolescence may reduce some characteristics of the expected functionalities (e.g. unauthorized  
246         access to data),
- 247     ○ Such obsolescence may cause the system to no longer comply with certain constraints (e.g. restriction  
248         on the use of certain materials, Freon for instance).

## 249 **2.6. Challenges**

250     Using the approach proposed in section 2.5, iteratively a set of requirements results, describing the ex-  
251     pected system. Developers will then work on the system architecture and will successively make design de-  
252     cisions. The system architecture is the “the embodiment of concept, the allocation of physical/informational  
253     function to elements of form, and the definition of relationship among the elements and with the surround-  
254     ing context” (Crawley, Cameron, & Selva, 2015). Architecting is a creative process in which the architect  
255     searches for solutions to a specific problem. The decisions developers may include technologies to be used,  
256     best practices, in order to fulfil the functional requirements. Iteratively they will reach a solution that will  
257     then be mapped to a physical architecture, comprising sub-systems and components. Part of these may  
258     come from the structural requirements, for example if a stakeholder imposes the use of a certain sub-system,  
259     technology or component.

260     A challenge will be to ensure that those sub-systems, components and/or functionalities with a high  
261     risk for obsolescence can be identified early enough in the design process. If this can be realized, then  
262     different choices open up to the developers: search for alternative solutions, search for double sourcing,  
263     accept the risk, etc. But this supposes, first of all, the ability to identify those sub-systems, components  
264     and/or functionalities that have a high obsolescence risk.

265     It is important to understand what obsolescence drivers exist, before we can aim to address them. The  
266     authors propose that two main groups of obsolescence drivers:

- 267     ○ Requirements-driven origins: for example, changes in legislation or any change in stakeholder or  
268         systems requirements.
- 269     ○ Component-driven origins: for example, the announcement of a stop of production of a component  
270         (called PDN or Product Discontinuance Notice) or an update/change.

271     These drivers can be found in Fig. 2. A requirement that changes obviously may have an impact on the  
272     system under development (or already in production), making all or part of developed solutions obsolescent.  
273     For example, as anti-pollution legislation for automobiles evolves, some of the cars in production would no  
274     longer be allowed to be sold as off a certain date. New solutions for depolluting would be necessary.

275     A component production change may affect an originally targeted functionality, resulting on it no longer  
276     being available for new systems to be produced or to be repaired. For example, when economically it is no  
277     longer interesting to produce a certain integrated circuit, a manufacturer may decide to stop its production,  
278     usually offering the customers a “last-time buy” of a certain quantity (nevertheless, sometimes due to tech-  
279     nological reasons these components cannot be stocked for a long period; last-time buy then in reality is not  
280     more than short term mitigation to a still in needed for solution problem). After this quantity will have been  
281     used, no more components are available and the systems can no longer be produced.



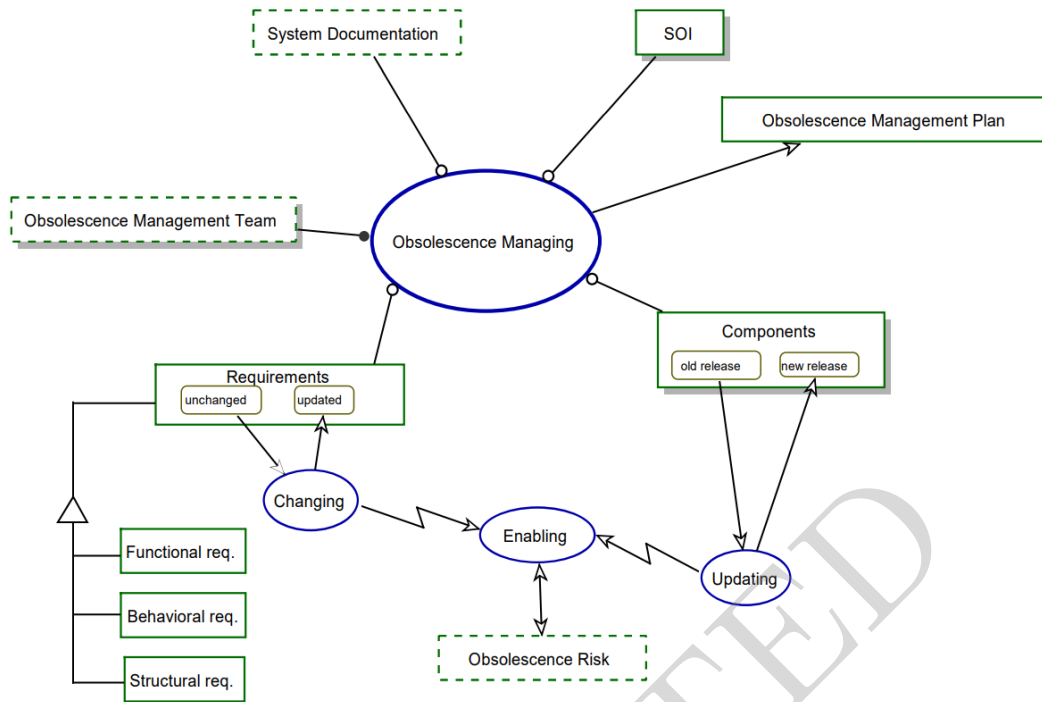


Fig. 2. Obsolescence Management System Object Process Diagram top-level specification.

282 A challenge is therefore to identify early on the design process which requirements are critical and which  
 283 components are at a critical path. The use of models resulting from the application of MBSE methodolo-  
 284 gies, in this case through the use of ARCADIA, allows the chains of dependencies between the entities of  
 285 the system architecture to be made explicit. These dependencies are specified in different models imple-  
 286 mented by ARCADIA but the one that has a sufficient level of detail for the analysis of the propagation of  
 287 the consequences of obsolescence is the physical architecture insofar as it not only shows the exchanges be-  
 288 tween components and functions but also specifies the mapping between components and functions (Roques,  
 289 2017).

### 290 3. Identification and Assessment approaches

291 This section details the proposal of identification and assessment phase approaches to tackle the obso-  
 292 lence management early on the stage of design of a SOI. There are two prerequisites that must be met to  
 293 put these approaches on use. The first is, as in the SD-22 proposal (SD-22, 2021), an Obsolescence Man-  
 294 agement Team shall exist. In addition, the system documentation should allow the elaboration of the main  
 295 system architecture models, or they should already exist. How to produce these models is out of the scope of  
 296 this paper. For the illustrative case of a weather forecasting system (see section 4) the following models are  
 297 in Capella: Operational, System, Logical and Physical Architecture diagrams, plus available and explained  
 298 in (Roques, 2017).

299 Systems are very often composed of a large number of components and modules; it is impractical to  
 300 put them all under obsolescence monitoring. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a first screening to  
 301 identify those most at risk. The screening analysis can be done considering criteria such as those cited by  
 302 (SD-22, 2021) such as: safety, mission criticality, cost, existing problems, life-cycle phase, sustainment

303 strategy (reflects maintenance possibilities). The screening should be able to identify a short-list of critical  
 304 components to monitor. Using system architecture models, it is possible to extract the initial short-list of  
 305 critical functions performed, totally or partially, by these critical components. Critical functions could be  
 306 also found by analyzing the functional chains in ARCADIA. Since a functional chain represents a sequence  
 307 of functions whose fulfilment enables the achievement of an operational capability of the system.

308 Dependencies represent a propagation channel between dependent entities. Therefore, determining  
 309 the possible propagations of the consequences of obsolescence requires a precise mapping of dependen-  
 310 cies within the system. The interdependencies between components (C-C), functions (F-F), requirement-  
 311 function (R-F), requirement-component (R-C), as well as between function-component (C-F) need to be  
 312 known. These interdependencies can be partly identified in the first levels of the ARCADIA methodology;  
 313 however, we rely on the physical architecture (obtained in the last modeling step, cf. Fig. 7) which defines  
 314 these dependencies precisely.

315 Fig. 3 presents an in-zoomed Object Process Diagram of the Obsolescence Management System in Fig.  
 316 2 as well as its representation in natural language, which is known as a fundamental advantage of OPM  
 317 (Dori, 2016). As a reminder, the process of Obsolescence Managing as defined by (SD-22, 2021) includes  
 318 the processes of: preparing, identifying, assessing, analysing, and implementing (in blue, cf. figure 3). This  
 319 in-zoomed OPD was achieved following the systems modelling paradigm of OPM for representing objects  
 320 and processes of a system. An object can be seen as what a system or a product is, and a process as what  
 321 the system does. This paper focuses on the identifying and assessing process.

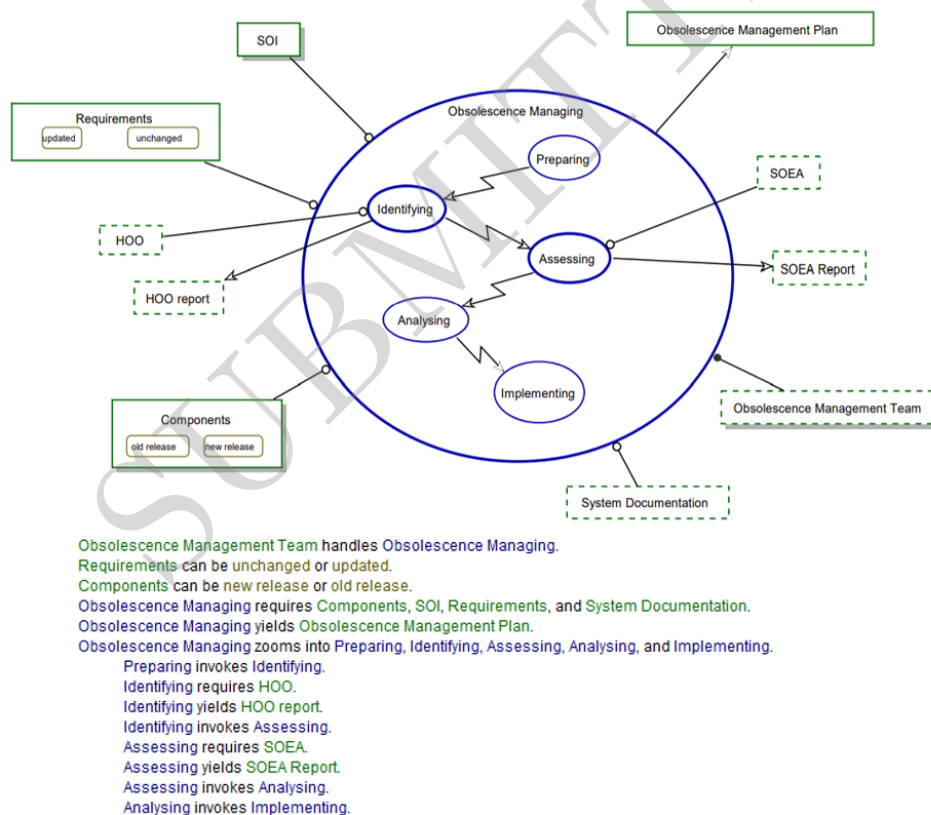


Fig. 3. Obsolescence Management System in-zoomed Object Process Diagram.

322 The initial critical components and functions are settled in the preparation and the identification phases  
 323 of Obsolescence Management. Then the Identifying process requires the first approach called House of

324 Obsolescence (HOO), which is an object (in green as seen on Fig. 3). Section 3.1 defines the HOO, which  
 325 allows the mapping of obsolescence risk propagation due to critical components. The usage of the HOO  
 326 may also point out at some other hidden components and functions that could be impacted. The output of  
 327 the application of HOO is a consolidated list of components and functions to monitor. The second approach,  
 328 called System Obsolescence Criticality Analysis (SOCA) required by the Assessing process, permits to set  
 329 a priority within a list of obsolescence risks is presented in section 3.2.

### 330 3.1. House of Obsolescence

331 The House of Obsolescence (Fig. 4) is a concept inspired by the well-known House of Quality (Pyzdek  
 332 & Keller, 2014). It maps external-driven obsolescence changes to the consolidated short-list of critical  
 333 functions and components. The approach analyses changes in requirements and components and maps their  
 334 propagation.

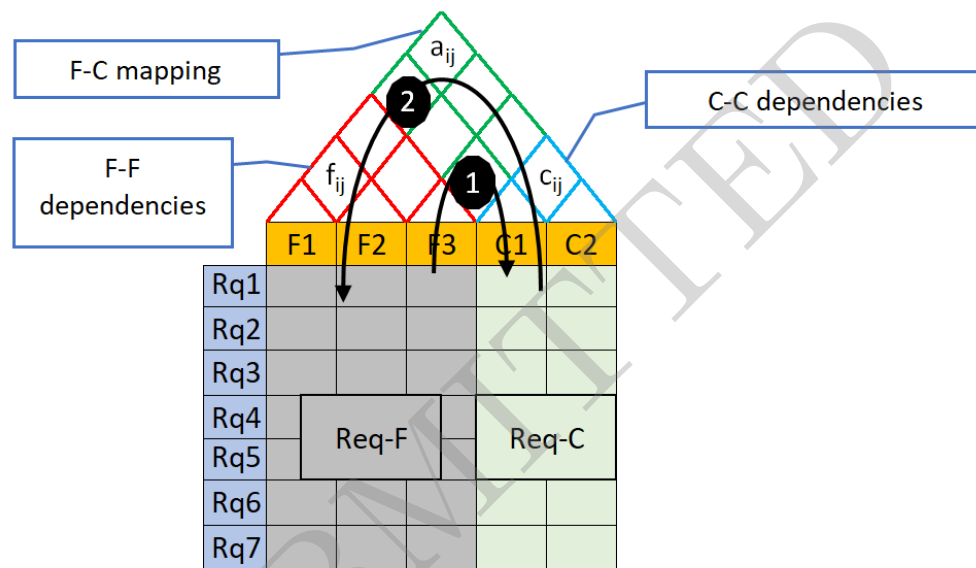


Fig. 4. House of Obsolescence.

335 The roof of the HOO shows the dependencies within the system. It enables to link the consequences  
 336 of externally sourced obsolescence to system components and functions. Each column corresponds to a  
 337 critical function or component. The C-C dependencies are mapped on the top of the components columns  
 338 (colour light blue) and show whether there are any exchanges between every couple of considered compo-  
 339 nents,  $c_{ij}$ . The idea is that when two components have a non-directed dependency between them (e.g. data  
 340 transfer from a microcontroller to a memory), any change in the sender may affect the receiver. From an  
 341 obsolescence point of view, problems with the sender could lead to modifications of receiver, and vice versa.  
 342 These modifications are either “first-order hardware changes” or “first-order software changes”, see (SD-22,  
 343 2021).  $c_{ij}$  can be either symbolic value (high, medium, low), or numerical:

- 344 ○ Boolean (1: with or 0: without),
- 345 ○ Natural values (for instance from 0 to 3 using an adopted measure scale) or
- 346 ○ Real values (from 0 to 1).

347 The F-F dependencies are mapped on the top of the columns that correspond to the functions (the triangle  
 348 in red colour). These dependencies are gathered through the Boolean  $f_{ij}$ . The functions dependencies define

349 how the outputs of a function are used by others. For instance, the function “Collect Weather Data” supplies  
 350 data to the function “Elaborate the Current Situation”, (see Fig. 7). Therefore, any changes in the first  
 351 function may impact the second. These are the functional dependencies which are identified since the  
 352 System Analysis level of ARCADIA methodology (Roques, 2017).

353 At the very top of the roof of HOO the mapping between functions and the components can be found in  
 354 colour green rhombus. It answers to the question of “who does what?”. The mapping is valuated through  
 355 the Boolean value of  $a_{ij}$ . For instance, in Fig. 7, it can be seen that the function “Acquire Temperature” is  
 356 performed by the component “Temperature sensor”.

357 It is important to notice the Req-F, Req-C, C-C, F-F and F-C dependencies could be also represented  
 358 with DSMs (Design Structural Matrices). To be more exact, the HOO could be exchanged with a Multi  
 359 Domain Matrix (MDM) that includes the Requirement, Component and Function DSM with the pertinent  
 360 resulting Domain Mapping Matrices (DMM). The dependencies present in the HOO can be extracted from  
 361 system models. In the case of EOLE (section 4) from the ARCADIA models of the studied SOI present in  
 362 (Roques, 2017), which contains in-depth knowledge of the system described through the different levels of  
 363 modelling of the ARCADIA method (cf. section 2.3).

364 The HOO assists to track the possible functions, components and requirements of the SOI that may be  
 365 affected by an obsolescence risk. With the aid of the HOO roof it is possible to cascade the possible impacts  
 366 on the components due to changes in the requirements, when going through the functions affected by a  
 367 change in the requirements (represented by the arrow numbered “1”, Fig. 4). It is also possible to see how  
 368 changes in the components can impact requirements (represented by the arrow numbered “2” in Fig. 4).

369 The modeled dependencies are obtained through dependency transitivity; i.e. IF (Y depends on X) and  
 370 (Z depends on Y) THEN (Z depends on X). This allows to chains the dependencies linking various (directly  
 371 and indirectly) dependent entities together. Nevertheless, this reasoning process must take into account the  
 372 following possibilities:

- 373 ○ the obsolescence risk of X may have no impact on Y, or
- 374 ○ that Y has to be modified and the dependency transitivity process is cancelled on Y, or
- 375 ○ that the mitigation resolution implemented on Y do impose modifications on Z. This would constitute
- 376 the only case where the dependency transitivity is pursued to Z.

377 In other words, the exploitation of this transitivity can only be done through the inclusion of the listed  
 378 uncertainties by using probabilistic models such as Bayesian networks for instance (Zolghadri et al., 2018).  
 379 The key elements in controlling the propagation of obsolescence may be to break the chain of dependency,  
 380 to reduce the likelihood of propagation through the implementation of remedial solutions throughout the  
 381 dependency links, or to mitigate its possible impacts. Requirements changes could be due to imposed new  
 382 environment regulations for instance, or changes imposed by the suppliers. For example, if the “Temperature  
 383 sensor” has a new operating temperature range it could have an impact on the thermal requirements of the  
 384 system. As it can be seen in Fig. 7 a change on the temperature sensor could have an impact on function  
 385 “Acquire Temperature”.

### 386 3.2. System Obsolescence Criticality Analysis

387 In the context of obsolescence criticality analysis, the first parameter to set is the time horizon H. H is a  
 388 parameter that the developers have in mind at the beginning for the project linked with its visibility. It is a  
 389 parameter taken into account for Obsolescence forecasting (IEC-62402, 2019; Jennings, Wu, & Terpenney,  
 390 2016; SD-22, 2021) and in general setting for forecasting for technology planning and road mapping as  
 391 in (Yuskevich, Smirnova, Vingerhoeds, & Golkar, 2021). The purpose is to define the time frame beyond  
 392 which the risk factor estimations are too uncertain to be usable but also below which the study loses all its  
 393 meaning. For example, an analysis of the risk of obsolescence for a smartphone cannot be carried out over

394 a too short period of time (a few days since no changes is expected in such a short period) or over a too long  
 395 period of time (a few years given the speed at which technological innovations are introduced).

396 The choice of this horizon H depends on factors such as: the life cycle and the remaining operational time  
 397 of the system (e.g. the announced [end of life of Python 2.0](#) and the suggestion to change to Python 3), the life  
 398 cycle and the remaining operational time of the critical component under consideration, and the knowledge  
 399 available on possible changes in customer needs and requirements (e.g. 5G spreading technology), but also  
 400 the evolution of competing systems and competing technologies. Once this horizon identified, the rest of  
 401 the analysis can be performed. Python 2.0 was released in 2000, but after a few years it was discovered  
 402 that big changes were needed to put in place in order to improve Python. In 2006, Python 3.0 was released,  
 403 nevertheless many people did not upgrade. To not discomfort the customers and users, for many years  
 404 the both Python 2 and Python 3 were improved. Eventually the workload became too big, there were  
 405 improvements Python 2.0 could not handle and it jeopardized the further improvement of Python 3.0. In  
 406 2008 the sunset of Python 2 was announced for 2015, and people were asked to upgrade before then. Not  
 407 everyone upgraded, and in 2014 it was decided to extend that sunset till 2020. If knowing all of this a  
 408 company would have decided to create a new product based on Python 2.0 in 2010-2015, the company was  
 409 willingly accepting the future security risks and costs of porting the project to Python 3.0.

410 In order to prioritize the resources for obsolescence mitigation allocation, it is suggested to assign prior-  
 411 ity on how to approach obsolescence risk. A risk which can be defined in terms of a combination of impact  
 412 and likelihood ([ISO-31000, 2018](#)). In order to perform this prioritization a System Obsolescence Critical-  
 413 ity Analysis (SOCA) is proposed, inspired by the Failure Mode Effects and Criticality Analysis (FMECA)  
 414 ([IEC-60812, 2018](#)), see Fig. 5. The critical system functions and components are listed in the rows. For  
 415 each of them, it is first determined whether the risk is related to suitability or availability (column “b”). Suit-  
 416 ability and availability refer respectively to obsolescence and DMSMS. This is to highlight that the solution  
 417 to be deployed depends on the nature of the risk whether it is obsolescence (e.g. technological overrun) or  
 418 DMSMS (the supplier who has stopped manufacturing the component).

419 Further in Fig. 6, based on the obsolescence classification presented in section 2.2, the obsolescence  
 420 class is identified in the column “c”. Each of the obsolescence risks could have an impact on the system  
 421 requirements (see section 2.4). The effects in the system are identified and reported in column “d”. The  
 422 following columns, severity (S) and occurrence (O) which correspond to impact and likelihood respectively,  
 423 define an obsolescence risk index for critical functions and components ([Salas Cordero, Vingerhoeds, Zol-  
 424 ghadri, & Baron, 2020](#)). While the obsolescence criticality index is defined by the previous mentioned  
 425 parameters and detectability (D) (see Fig. 5). The values for severity, occurrence and detectability can  
 426 be attributed by subject matter experts (SME) with the help of different scale bands or categories as the  
 427 following:

- 428 (1). Occurrence: linked with the likelihood of the appearance of an obsolescence issue. The proposed  
 429 scale bands for the SME in this case is: Certain, Likely, Unlikely, and Rare.
- 430 (2). Severity: relative ranking of potential or actual consequences of the obsolescence issue related to  
 431 the effects (column d) on the system. The scale indicators for severity are: Catastrophic, Major,  
 432 Important, Minor, and Negligible.
- 433 (3). Detectability: represents the likelihood with which an obsolescence risk is expected to be detected  
 434 before the actual obsolescence issue arises. For detectability the proposed scale is: Certain, Likely,  
 435 Unlikely, and Rare. There are various possible ways for a company to discover obsolescence risks. In  
 436 some cases, there is documented information (published regulations or any discontinuance disclaims).

437 The Obsolescence Criticality Index, OCI, is then calculated:

$$OCI = S \times O \times D \quad (1)$$

Temporal horizon: N years		Obsolescence value						possible mitigation measures
System obsolescence risk	Availability/Suitability	Obsolescence Classification	Effect	Severity	Occurrence	Detectability	Obsolescence criticality index	
A	b	c	d	S	O	D	OCI	m
Components	C1							
	C2							
Functions	F1							
	F2							
	F3							

Fig. 5. System Obsolescence Criticality Analysis form

438 For the critical analysis it was decided to use the scale as proposed by the French Standardization Association (AFNOR) (Simailaud, 2017) from 1-10 as it can be seen in Fig. 6. AFNOR defines two situations  
 439 under which a risk should be considered for future monitoring or treatment (orange boxes in Fig. 6). The  
 440 practicality of this consideration led authors to use these two situations as potentially important signs of  
 441 obsolescence risk as well. But clearly, the operation of SOCA can be adapted to the context of the study  
 442 depending on the nature of the industry, company or product.

- 444 o When the severity is 10.
- 445 o When the OCI is greater or equal to the criticality threshold (CT). This criticality threshold can be  
 446 reviewed. For the EOLE illustrative case it will be considered that the CT=100.

447 The resulting obsolescence risks are then ordered in the diminishing direction of the OCI.

Obsolescence Criticality Index	Criticality threshold: 100 (or 10 if G=10)	O	Rare				Unlikely				Likely				Certain			
			1	4	7	10	1	4	7	10	1	4	7	10	1	4	7	10
		D	Certain	Likely	Unlikely	Rare	Certain	Likely	Unlikely	Rare	Certain	Likely	Unlikely	Rare	Certain	Likely	Unlikely	Rare
			1	4	7	10	1	4	7	10	1	4	7	10	1	4	7	10
G	Negligible	1	1	4	7	10	4	16	28	40	7	28	49	70	10	40	70	100
	Minor	3	3	12	21	30	12	48	84	120	21	84	147	210	30	120	210	300
	Important	6	6	24	42	60	24	96	168	240	42	168	294	420	60	240	420	600
	Major	9	9	36	63	90	36	144	252	360	63	252	441	630	90	360	630	900
	Catastrophic	10	10	40	70	100	40	160	280	400	70	280	490	700	100	400	700	1000

Fig. 6. Obsolescence Criticality Index and values requiring obsolescence monitoring.

448 **4. Illustrative Case: EOLE**

449 The Environment Observation Link to Earth (EOLE) case, developed by (Roques, 2017), is used to  
 450 illustrate partially the proposed approaches. EOLE is composed of an acquisition and a ground system. The  
 451 acquisition system is a sounding balloon launched into the atmosphere in charge of data collection using

452 sensors and data transmission to the ground system. The pressure and temperature are the two main sensors  
 453 of the payload. The ground system is in charge of data acquisition planning, collecting the data from the  
 454 acquisition system. The system is modelled using ARCADIA methodology, supported by Capella. All  
 455 details of the use case can be found in (Roques, 2017).

456 The ARCADIA methodology allowed to identify the Sounding balloon and Ground station; the yellow  
 457 boxes in the middle of the physical architecture, see Fig. 7. The Sounding balloon is composed of two  
 458 modules: Sensor-Holder and Nano-Computer. The Ground station is made of Publication and Processing  
 459 Servers. The deep blue boxes define the mappings between the functions and the components of the system.  
 460 For instance, the Temperature Sensor performs the function Acquire Temperature, i.e., defining “Who does  
 461 What”. The external entities and their exchanges with EOLE are represented in clear blue: Earth atmosphere,  
 462 Weather operator, etc. They contain their respective functions. The exchanges between the internal and  
 463 external entities are represented by oriented arcs.

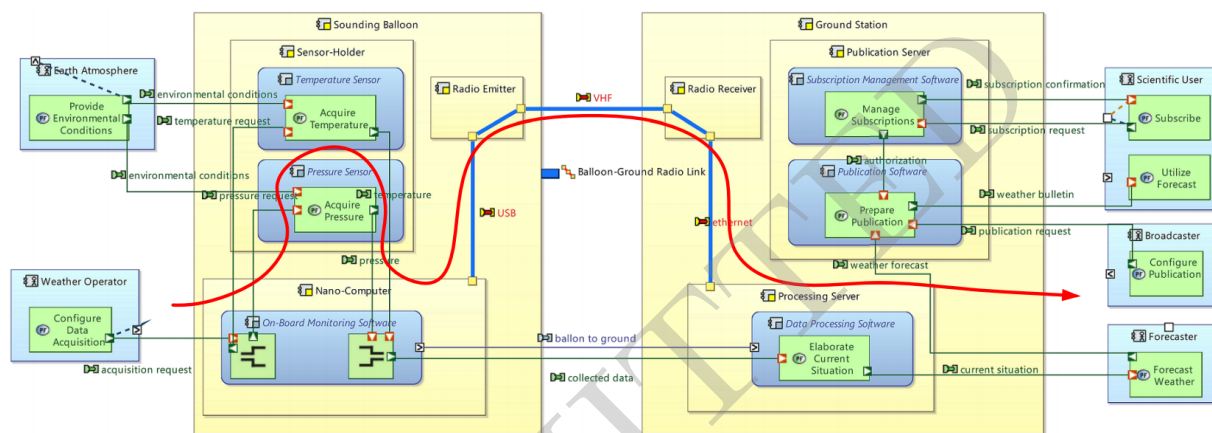


Fig. 7. Risk analysis by System Obsolescence Criticality Analysis, and OCI; Capella Physical Architecture model. (Adapted from (Roques, 2017).

464 **Obsolescence risk rationale.** For this illustrative case it was considered that the VHF technology has  
 465 shortcomings comparing to UHF (Ultra High Frequency, 430MHz). The advantage of UHF is the reduction  
 466 of interference due to a more accessible frequency spectrum. This contributes to the reliability of data  
 467 transmission between the two sub-systems: the Sounding balloon and the Ground station.

468 1) **HOO.** Remind that the goal is to map requirements (Req.) to system functions and components. For  
 469 this illustrative case it is considered that the Req. 01W is linked with the following functions:

- 470 ○ Emission and Reception: transmissions of the Sounding Balloon with the Ground station (by Radio  
 471 Emitter and Receiver).
- 472 ○ Elaborate Current Situation (by Ground Station).

473 This requirement can be found on Fig. 8 at the beginning of the red dotted line in the HOO roof. The  
 474 red, blue and black dotted line represent the entire dependency chains. The blue line shows how a change  
 475 in the emission function might affect the radio emitter. Whether if a change in Req. 01W would affect  
 476 the emission function but would not propagate to the reception function then the elements through which  
 477 the black dotted line goes would not be affected. The two components, radio emitter and radio receiver,  
 478 are central to this functional chain; the obsolescence mitigation/resolution may have a direct impact on  
 479 them. While the processing server may experience or not an indirect impact in case any measure is taken.  
 480 Therefore, the radio receiver and emitter are critical and should be monitored. Further it is necessary to  
 481 estimate its OCI through the use of the SOCA matrix.

482 2) **SOCA application.** Its goal is to assess the criticality of obsolescence risk, and to brainstorm mit-  
 483 igation strategies. This obsolescence risk is related to the suitability, column b of the SOCA matrix. It  
 484 corresponds to a technological obsolescence according to (Bartels et al., 2012); column c. The main ef-  
 485 fect (column d) is the possible message errors due to the interferences. This means the system provided  
 486 service may be degraded, or in fact out of service (OOS). Suppose that the analysis is performed in 2019  
 487 and the horizon of the study is 5 years due to the newer version of EOLE that is predicted to be sold. The  
 488 computation of the OCI is obtained based on the expert assessment of severity, detectability and occurrence:

- 489 ○ S = 9: the obsolescence will degrade the service usability of the whole system.
- 490 ○ O = 7: the UHF technology is already available; the obsolescence of VHF is highly probable.
- 491 ○ D = 1: the state-of-the-art of radio transmission is easily available; there is no need for any specific
- 492 effort to detect it.

493 The OCI in this case is equal to 63.

494 Since the severity is less than 10 and the overall index lower than 100, according to the previously defined  
 495 critical levels (section 3.2) there are no measures to be taken at the moment during the obsolescence manage-  
 496 ment process, but to continue monitoring. However, the significant value of the severity level defined by the  
 497 subject matter experts (S=9) may lead to a more in-depth analysis determining the obsolescence mitigation  
 498 solution that could be considered. If this is the case, the comparison of the available solutions (see Ap-  
 499 pendix) should lead to the least expensive solutions, i.e. the "Simple Substitute" or "Complex Substitute",  
 500 as the implementation of the UHF solution will require adaptations, for example in the installed programs  
 501 of the Nano-computer. The final choice of resolution to implement requires more technical definition which  
 502 is out of scope of this example.

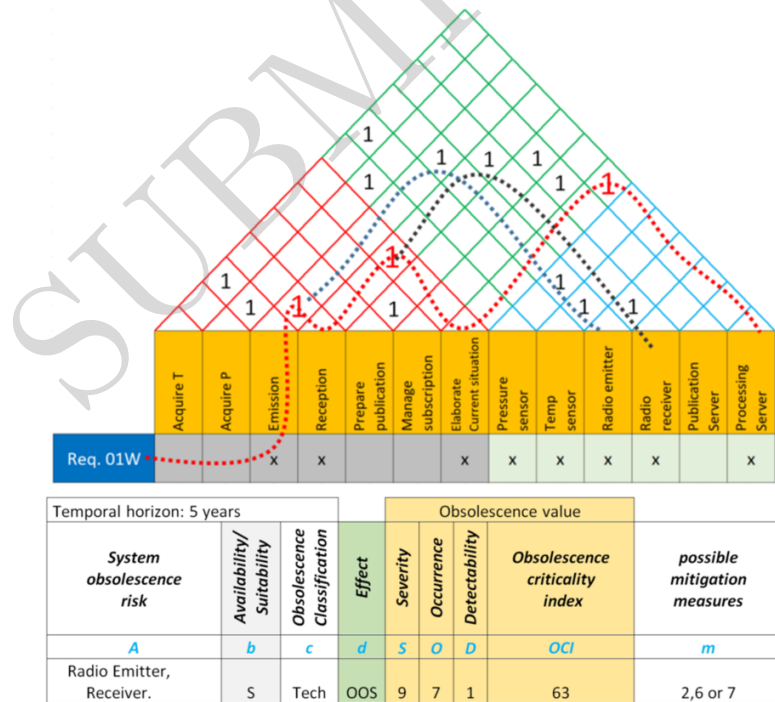


Fig. 8. HOO and SOCA of EOLE.



## 503 5. Conclusions and perspectives

504 This paper addressed the fundamentals of obsolescence and proposed two approaches that aim to support  
505 the key mechanisms of obsolescence understanding, propagation and mitigation for a given application.

506 Obsolescence issues are one of the main costs in the life-cycle of sustainment-dominated systems, those  
507 that require support for many decades. This paper has identified the main drivers for obsolescence as being  
508 related to the system requirements, and underlying sources such as legislation, and the actual components  
509 used for the realisation of the system.

510 Starting from the observation that a very significant part of the system is defined in the early design  
511 stages, this paper advocates for addressing obsolescence assessment and management from the earliest  
512 design stages. This paper therefore proposed two tools building on a model-based systems engineering  
513 approach to proactively assess obsolescence risks.

514 The application of the proposed tools allows leading obsolescence management teams towards a targeted  
515 consideration of the system components and functions likely to be impacted by obsolescence. The House of  
516 Obsolescence seeks to guide towards a mapping of how the modifications of requirements or components  
517 affect the system of interest. Once the main components and functions that could be affected have been  
518 identified, the use of SOCA should lead the team to estimate the priority within the obsolescence risks  
519 and the techniques that can be put in place to mitigate them. The use of systems engineering models is  
520 fundamental to the operation of these tools.

521 For future perspectives, different approaches can be investigated and are currently being explored by the  
522 authors. An option could be to build upon the predictive models that can be obtained from the proposed  
523 tools (probabilistic graphs and mainly the Bayesian networks) and to use them in the determination of com-  
524 ponents and functions impacted by obsolescence. Another option could be to build upon Design Structure  
525 Matrices (DSM) as modelling tool (Salas Cordero et al., 2020) and using this approach to assess the critical  
526 components. During early stages of design, different architectures could be analysed and the results from  
527 such approaches, taking into account technology and/or component maturity for the given application, may  
528 then lead to a complementary view on obsolescence risk.

529 Further perspectives include evaluating the impact of early obsolescence risk analysis of the design on  
530 the life cycle of a system, as well as observing how design changes propagate when utilizing these tools  
531 method during the conceptual stage on the rest of the system development whilst actively tracking the risks  
532 for each design decision made.

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## 635 A. Appendix

The obsolescence mitigation/resolution methods (SD-22, 2021).

	<i>Mitigation/ Resolution</i>	<i>Definition</i>
1	No solution required	Existing stock will satisfy future demand.
2	Approved item	The issue is resolved by the use of items already approved on and still in production.
3	End-of-need buy	A sufficient quantity is purchased to sustain the product until its next technology refreshment or the discontinuance of the host assembly.
4	Repair	The issue is resolved by: Repair, Reclamation of items from marginal, out-of-service, or surplus materials, ... to ensure continued support.
5	Extension of product or support	The supplier is incentivized to continue providing the obsolete items.
6	Simple substitute	The item is replaced with an existing item that meets all requirements without modification to either the item or its Next-Higher Assembly and requires only minimal qualification.
7	Complex substitute	A replacement item that has different specifications but requires no modification of the origin product or the NHA, is researched and validated.
8	Development of a new item or origin	A replacement product is developed that meets the requirements of the original product without affecting the NHA.
9	Redesign-NHA	The affected item's NHA must be modified. Only the NHA is affected, and the new design will not affect anything at a higher level.
10	Redesign-complex/ system replacement	A major assembly redesign affects assemblies beyond the obsolete item's NHA and may require that higher level assemblies, software, and interfaces be changed.

Fig. A.1. The obsolescence mitigation/resolution methods (SD-22, 2021)