Crisis Management Simulation Exercise Design Manual

United Nations Peacekeeping

Table of Contents

Foreword 5
Acronyms and Abbreviations 6
Introduction and Overview 7
Purpose 7
Target Audience 7
Crisis Response Mechanism 8
The Role of the Integrated Operations Teams and Integrated Task Forces 9
The Role of Simulations 10
How to Use this Document 11
Section 1. Fundamentals of Simulation Design 13
Overview 13
Fundamental Principles 13
Simulation Exercise Project Cycle 15
Phase 1. Needs Assessment 15
Phase 2. Design & Development 16
Phase 3. Conduct SIMEX 16
Phase 4. Evaluate SIMEX 16
Phase 5. Implement Improvement Plan 16
Simulation Program Management 17
Developing the Mission Exercise Plan 17
Types of Simulation Exercises 17
Exercise Planning Team 18
Keys to a Successful Exercise Planning Team 18
Key Simulation Planning Meetings 19
Section 2: Exercise Design Steps 19
Step One: Conduct a Needs Assessment 20
Step Two: Define Scope 20
Components of the Scope 21
Step Three: Establish Objectives 21
Choose Essential Capability 22
Select Major Critical Tasks to be Demonstrated 22
Create SMART Objective 22

Step Four Create Scenario Narrative 24
Step Five: Develop Major and Detailed Events 25
Example of Major and Detailed Events 26
Step Six: Identifying Expected Actions 27
Step Seven: Write Injects 27
Step Eight – Contract Exercise Evaluation Guides 29
Sample Exercise Evaluation Guide 31
Summary 32
Key Definitions 33
Annex A. Determining the Right Type of Exercise 37
Discussion-Based Exercises 37
Operations-Based Exercises 38
Comparison of Exercise Subtypes 40
Example of a Building Block Approach – Business Continuity Management 44
Example of a Building Block Approach – Mass Casualty Management 44
Exercise Staffing by Subtype 45
Guidelines for Making the Scenario More Realistic for Players 46
Annex B: Exercise Planning Meetings 48
Explanation of Recommended Meetings 48
Developing a Mission Exercise Plan 51
Mission Exercise Plan Workshop 51
Suggested Content for Mission Exercise Plan 52
Sample Multi-Year Exercise Projection 53
Annex C. Best Practices for Workshops and TTXs 54
Remember the Limitations of a Discussion-Based Exercise 54
Useful Materials 54
SIMEX Support Staff 55
Logistical Considerations 55
Sample Injects for a Discussion-Based Exercise 56
Examples of Room Set Up Options 57
Facilitator Tips 59
Annex D. Best Practices for Functional Exercises 60
Level of Focus During Functional Exercises 60

Identify Who is Playing and Who is Not 60
Establishing and Managing a SimCell 60
Sample Layout of a SimCell 61
Developing the Scenario 61
Useful Material 62
SIMEX Support Staffing 62
Controller / Evaluator Training 63
Sample Injects and Master Scenario Events List for Operations Based Exercise 64
Annex E. Best Practices for Full Scale Exercises 66
Level of Focus During Full Scale Exercises 66
Field Evolution Developments 66
Role Players 66
Safety Procedures 67
Useful Material 67
SIMEX Support Staffing 68
Controller / Evaluator Training 68
Annex F: Evaluating and Debriefing 69
Identifying Evaluators 69
Tips for Successful Evaluation 69
Conducting a Participant Debriefing 70
Sample of Completed Exercise Evaluation Guide 76
Annex G: Improvement Planning 78
Post-SIMEX Debriefing 78
The After Action Report 79
The After Action Meeting 79
The Improvement Plan 79
Sample Improvement Plan Matrix 81
Continuous Improvement Planning 82

Foreword

Recent studies within the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations have identified the need for more effective training and exercises as a method to improve crisis management in missions. Simulation exercises have proven themselves to be an invaluable tool for different military, police and first responder agencies around the world. They represent good practice that can improve decision making, team cohesion, individual confidence, and system performance. In many cases the familiarization or repetition of simulated scenarios can save lives.

It is to this end that we are pleased to introduce this manual which standardises the approach to simulation exercises and provides guidance to enhance the effectiveness of simulation exercises as a tool to improve crisis preparedness for missions.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix
Under-Secretary-General
for Peacekeeping Operations

Atul Khare
Under-Secretary-General
for Field Support

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAR/IP	After Action Report and Improvement Plan
BCM	Business Continuity Management
CMT	Crisis Management Team
ECM	Essential Capabilities Manual
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
FSX	Full Scale Exercise
FX	Functional Exercise
IMTC	Integrated Mission Training Centre
IOT	Integrated Operational Team
ITS	Integrated Training Service
JOC	Joint Operations Centre
MEP	Mission Exercise Plan
MILOBS	Military Observers
MSEL	Master Scenario Events List
OCB	Operations Coordination Body
ORMS	Organisational Resilience Management System
SimCell	Simulation Cell
SIMEX	Simulation Exercise
SitMan	Situation Manual
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRSG	Special Representative to the Secretary General
TCC/PCC	Troop Contributing Country/Police Contributing Country
TTX	Tabletop Exercise
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDFS	United Nations Department of Field Support
UNDPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNDPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHQ	United Nations Headquarters
UNOCC	United Nations Operations & Crisis Centre
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

Introduction and Overview

Purpose

A key UN mission policy priority must be to prevent conflict or other crises from developing that may affect the UN's ability to fulfil the terms of its mandate. A crisis marks the point at which events become intensely difficult or dangerous. The term crisis can also be used to indicate a period of extreme instability.

Effective crisis management in a UN mission comprises: (1) the process of preventing, containing or resolving crises before they develop into armed conflict, or serious breakdown of law and order, or a major loss of moral authority; (2) planning for possible escalation; and (3) addressing the underlying causes.

In a UN mission, the military instrument often plays a decisive role in providing or building a secure environment. However, crisis management cannot succeed without cross-mission, integrated cooperation to deal with the plethora of threats. Inter-departmental relationships need more than simply harmonised processes.

In a mission context, an integrated approach requires clear objectives, strong leadership and collaboration across departments to ensure that efforts are coherently applied. The mission approach to a crisis is likely to be framed within a broader national response (i.e. by the host nation's government) and involve other actors including perhaps, neighbouring countries, the wider UN Country Team, NGOs and others. They may have competing aims and agendas - so achieving coherence in this environment is likely to be very challenging.

Shared understanding brings distinct professional, technical and cultural disciplines together, albeit with unique values and perceptions. Understanding helps to meld different capabilities, give extra perspectives and enhance resilience. A shared understanding can only be built between crises through cooperative working practices, liaison and rigorous training: hence the need for simulation exercises.

Through the guidance of this Crisis Management Simulation Exercise Design Manual, Crisis Management Focal Points and planners can develop, conduct, and evaluate Simulation Exercises (SIMEX) within their missions, utilizing a standardized capabilities-based approach to creating exercises. Recognizing that the crisis management focal points often have other tasks to perform in their daily workload, it is understandable that some may find the extra duty of developing, conducting and evaluating exercises to be an added burden. The intention of this manual to provide a roadmap to assist with creating high quality exercises that will be a valuable experience for staff in a mission.

Target Audience

This manual is intended to provide support to the mission Chief of Staff, Chief JOC or JOC equivalent, Crisis Management Focal Point or other staff who have been charged

with developing simulation exercises for the field mission. While the steps set out in this manual can be used to plan and conduct any type of simulation exercise, the focus of this manual will be on creating successful, realistic, and challenging table-top exercises for the Mission Leadership Team, Crisis Management Team (CMT), and the Operations Coordination Body (OCB). In order to be successful, these exercises should engage the CMT and mission leadership at the strategic level, and the OCB at the operational level, validating and improving capabilities such as leadership, decision-making, strategic communications, and coordination with national and regional authorities in country and with the UN Agencies, humanitarian organisations and non-governmental organisations.

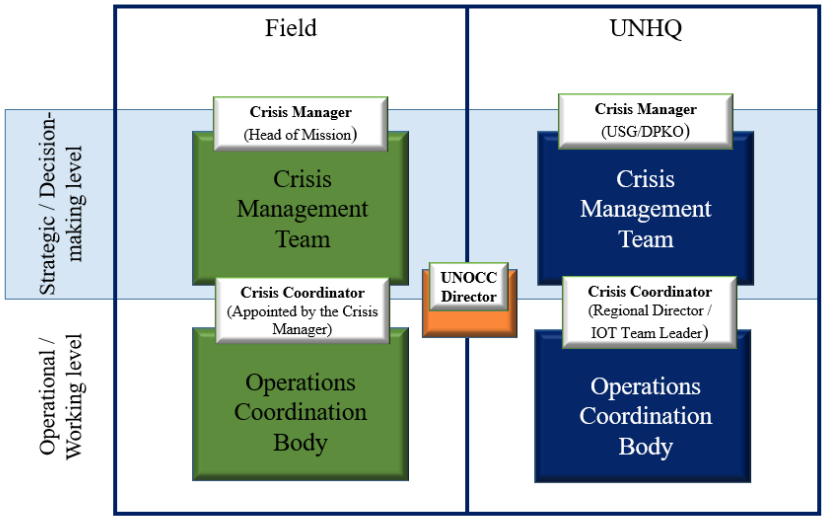
While this manual is intended to support the development of simulations exercises at the mission-level, the missions need to include UNHQ, the Integrated Operational Teams, and Integrated Mission Training Centre in the development of simulations to ensure maximum benefit and value of the exercise.

Crisis Response Mechanism[1]

The following elements should be engaged in either the development of the simulation exercise, or as participants to be evaluated:

- Crisis Management Team (CMT) – This leadership-level, cross-pillar decision-making body shall be chaired by a Crisis Manager, who will be the USG/DPKO or designated person at UNHQ, and the Head of Mission or designated person in the mission.
- Operations Coordination Body (OCB) – This working-level, cross pillar body shall be led by a Crisis Coordinator, who is usually the Director of the relevant regional division of the Office of Operations or Integrated Operational Team Leader at UNHQ, and a person designated by the Head of the field presence. This body will support all relevant tasks, such as day-to-day operations of the crisis response, policy recommendations, and common messaging.

[1] **UNDPKO / DFS** *SOP for HQ Crisis Response in Support of Peacekeeping Operations* (Dec. 22, 2016)



The Role of the Integrated Operations Teams and Integrated Task Forces

- Integrated Operational Teams (IOT) – The IOTs will monitor events in their respective mission areas and notify all concerned, including the UNOCC Director. The IOT will consult with their respective mission on contingency plans, including updated security and evacuation arrangements, and explore options for cooperation with other missions. The IOT will be an invaluable resource in the development of a realistic and challenging simulation and should also be engaged during the planning phases.
- Team Leader of Integrated Operational Team – During a crisis with UNHQ involvement, the IOT Team Leader directs the crisis response efforts as the Crisis Coordinator unless authority is retained by the hierarchy. The Team Leader makes recommendations to the Regional Director on the activation of crisis response mechanisms.
- Integrated Task Force (ITF) – During crises involving an integrated field presence with a deployed peacekeeping operation, the ITF, comprising representatives of relevant United Nations entities at UNHQ, shall remain active throughout the life cycle of the integrated presence. The IOT will chair the ITF, convening meetings on behalf of the United Nations system to address issues of strategic significance or programmatic impact.
- In the event of a rapidly and significantly deteriorating situation or sudden onset crisis, the IOT, in conjunction with the UNOCC and mission leadership, will make recommendations to the USG/DPKO on the activation of crisis response procedures for accelerated and streamlined decision-making, operational coordination, information flow, and communication spanning the pillars of the United Nations.

- Integrated Training Service (ITS) – ITS has a key role to play in the provision of training for crisis management within the mission through the Integrated Mission Training Centres (IMTC); and therefore exercises that have a training purpose should involve the IMTCs. Simulations should complement the strategic goals of the ITS and IMTC, ensuring that all entities are working towards strengthening the same capabilities.

As each of the above entities play a significant and coordinated role in crisis management, each body has an interest in the development of essential capabilities to ensure the effective, efficient, and successful implementation of the mission mandate, including the safety of civilians and staff, during a crisis situation. Each element should be engaged in the all aspects of preparedness planning, including training and simulation exercises, to ensure proper crisis management is carried out at all levels during a real situation.

The Role of Simulations

Simulation exercises play an invaluable role in testing the plans, procedures, command and control and mission equipment to validate training and identify gaps and opportunities to improve the preparedness of the mission. Simulation exercises provide a safe learning environment, where capabilities can be tested, roles and responsibilities can be defined, and communication across organizations can be demonstrated. Simulation exercises should be viewed as practice for a real event, in which capabilities requirements can be identified, interdependences examined and lessons learned. Simulation exercises can be used in a number of different scenarios, such as to strengthen the mission's ability to react to a serious breakdown in a peace agreement, prevent malicious acts, respond to threats to staff and civilians, and recover from a crisis to ensure that the mission's mandate can be upheld.

Exercises should form part of a continuous improvement strategy multi-year strategy, owned by the mission leadership and comprised of a programme of exercises aimed at practicing, evaluating, maintaining, and reviewing procedures. Critical to the success of this programme is the incorporation of clear objectives and performance management based on crisis management metrics, and consistent methodology to design and evaluate simulation exercises.

Simulation exercises are most effective when they utilise realistic scenarios based on identified threats in a particular mission. These scenarios should be relevant to the mission and avoid using generic 'notional' countries, and should challenge the performance of as many of the component parts of a mission.

Simulation exercises should not be viewed as something negative. They should be approached as a tangible learning opportunity for a mission to improve its internal capabilities to meet future crises at the strategic and operational levels. By identifying common critical functions or tasks that need to be completed successfully during a crisis, what will be referred to hereafter as "Essential Capabilities", mission leadership and Crisis Management Focal Points at the field missions can better prepare for the uncertainty of future crises by improving the ability to demonstrate Essential Capabilities regardless of the type of crisis. A mission should be able to improve its effectiveness, efficiency and resilience during crises and potentially save lives of vulnerable people as well as mission staff and protect property through a coordinated, capabilities-based approach.

How to Use this Document

This document is intended to be a companion to the toolkit of resources developed to support simulation exercises intended to improve the overall capability of field missions to respond to a recover from crisis while still implementing the requirements of their respective mandates. The suite of resources in the toolkit consist of:

- **UNDPKO Essential Capabilities Manual**
- **UNDPKO Simulation Exercise Design Manual**
- **UNDPKO Simulation Design Toolkit**

These materials combine to assist in the development, conduct and evaluation of a mission's Crisis Management Simulation Exercise (SIMEX) with the goal of developing an After Action Report and Improvement Plan to create a plan.

This **UNDPKO Simulation Exercise Design Manual** is intended to serve as a roadmap for simulation exercises. It represents the fundamentals and international best practices identified from the planning, conduct, and evaluation of civilian first responder, military, and business continuity simulation exercises. It will seek to outline the basic steps of simulation design to empower the crisis management focal point within the mission to effectively design, conduct, and evaluate a simulation, then to create an improvement plan.

The **UNDPKO Essential Capabilities Manual** will provide recommended capability benchmarks and metrics to assist with developing an evaluation and improvement planning for a mission.

The **UNDPKO Simulation Design Toolkit** will provide templates and other useful information to assist with developing simulation exercises, including template scenarios and a bank of pre-scripted exercise messages (or inputs and injects?).

This manual is organized as follows:

- **Section 1:** Fundamentals of Simulation Design describes the basic principles and methodology for designing and conducting simulations.
- **Section 2:** Simulation Design Steps outlines the 8 steps necessary to build a simulation exercise.

Annexes have been provided to help provide further information on more common exercises or exercise problems.

- **Annex A: Determining the Right Type of Exercise** will provide information on the various types of exercises, as well as recommendations for staffing and logistics.
- **Annex B: Exercise Planning Meetings** outlines the purpose, agenda and desired outcomes for each of the pre-exercise planning meetings.
- **Annex C. Best Practices in Workshops and Tabletop Exercises** will provide recommendations on running Discussion-Based Exercises; including room set-up options, logistics and tips for facilitation.
- **Annex D. Best Practices for Functional Exercises** will provide advice for running a functional exercise; including supporting documents and managing a Simulation Exercise Control.
- **Annex E. Best Practices for Full Scale Exercises** discusses the considerations for running full scale exercises, including safety and communications needs.
- **Annex F. Evaluating and Debriefing** provides guidance for conducting post-simulation exercise debriefing. It also includes sample templates for a Participant Feedback Form and an Exercise Evaluation Guide.
- **Annex F. Improvement Planning:** An Improvement Plan integrating it into continuous improvement actions.

Section 1. Fundamentals of Simulation Design

Overview

This manual reflects international best practice for the implementation of a simulation exercise program, including the planning, conduct and evaluation of specific exercises. Through a standardised approach based on capabilities, it is hoped that the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, and Department of Political Affairs can ensure that missions are able to effectively deal with a crisis, achieve enhanced safety and security of civilians, mission personnel and equipment, and ensure continued delivery of the mandate. The manual will also enhance consistency in the methodology for design, conduct, and evaluate exercises.

Fundamental Principles

The following principles represent international best practices on which high-quality simulations are built:

- **Senior Leadership Buy-in**. Leadership within the mission, including the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), linked to the leadership in United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ) must be engaged in the development of a simulation programmes and specific exercises. Senior leadership bear the responsibility for all the mission's activities, the successful implementation of the mission mandate, and the safety and security of all UN Security Management System personnel. The leadership should provide the overarching direction for simulation exercises (and the SRSG will be obliged to carry out regular exercises and this will be reflected in his/her annual Compact).
- **Capability and Objective Based.** Simulation exercises are most beneficial to the organization when they focus on evaluating essential capabilities and have clearly defined objectives. The aim must be to improve resilience and readiness. Capabilities and objectives should be set to evaluate a mission's capacity to carry out essential tasks defined in the Organisational Resilience Management System, UNDPKO Essential Capabilities Manual, and the mission's mandate. Objective and Capability based exercises can be more efficiently evaluated, leading to concrete steps towards greater readiness and actions on lessons learnt.
- **Risk- and Vulnerability-Based**. Basing simulation exercises on risks and conditions common to a mission allows the exercise planners to identify objectives, and Essential Capabilities to be evaluated. Scenarios should be based on political, conflict, or natural hazards and risks specific to a mission or emerging risks in the Region. Similarly, simulation exercises should be developed around known or perceived vulnerabilities within a mission, allowing participants to identify gaps.
- **Relevant**. Scenarios and capabilities evaluated during the simulation exercise should be relevant to a mission's mandate, and its current plans and procedures.

- **Cultural Acceptance**. First, and possibly most importantly, the personnel of a mission must understand and accept the need for a simulation exercise, not as a reflection of personal performance but as a tool to enhance the effectiveness of the mission, its readiness and ultimately to save lives. All UN staff in a mission, including Military Observers, Troop and Police Contingents must recognise that their participation in these exercises only enhances crisis preparedness.
- **Building Block Approach.** Simulation exercises should not be seen as a one-off event, but rather incorporated into a comprehensive, building block approach that allows for a series of exercises that either increase in complexity and challenge, or address various capabilities and known weaknesses.
- **Incorporate Inclusive Partnerships**. Just as a mission cannot function without partnerships with external partners, exercise planners should strive to incorporate these entities in the simulation whenever feasible. By including UN Country Team, Host Government agencies, or TCC/PCC counterparts, the exercise may be able to identify critical gaps, allowing stakeholders to address these shortfalls or at least identify weaknesses in integrated readiness.
- **Common Methodology.** Establishing a common approach to simulation exercise design enables planners from various missions to have a shared understanding of the processes of simulation management, conduct, evaluation and improvement. It also enables personnel from other missions or UNHQ, when time allows, to support exercises more efficiently.
- **Incorporation of Multi-Year Mission Exercise Plan.** There are several benefits to establishing a multi-year strategy for simulations. These can include better coordination with internal and external stakeholders to ensure the right people are participating in the exercises, enabling planners to establish a logical and appropriately challenging building block approach, and may assist in supporting budget requests for simulation training and support. It should be automatically programmed for at least one exercise per year that involves the entire mission, including all the key leadership staff.
- **Establish an Improvement Plan**. The purpose of simulation exercises is to identify gaps in integrated readiness for a crisis, which should be addressed and then corrected. This begins with a formalized After Action Report process. Once a simulation exercise has been conducted, the evaluation should produce a timeline for the implementation of corrective actions. These should then be addressed by the senior leadership and incorporated into crisis planning in a mission and included in future simulation exercises.
- **Based on a process of continuous improvement.** Simulation exercises should not be seen as one-off events to satisfy compliance requirements from UNHQ. They should be part of a continuous process to practice, evaluate, and improve the capabilities and integrated readiness within a mission to prepare for, respond to, and recover from major crises.

Simulation Exercise Project Cycle

Using a common methodology for simulation exercise (SIMEX) design enables better collaboration among exercise designers, while also making the process of design and development less cumbersome for the already busy focal point. This also helps to ensure consistent design, conduct and evaluation.

Figure 1.1 represents the Simulation Exercise Project Cycle. This is a continuous process to identify what critical functions need to be improved upon, developing a simulation exercise to practice and improve these functions, conducting a realistic and challenging simulation exercise, evaluating the performance and then implementing improvement actions.[2]

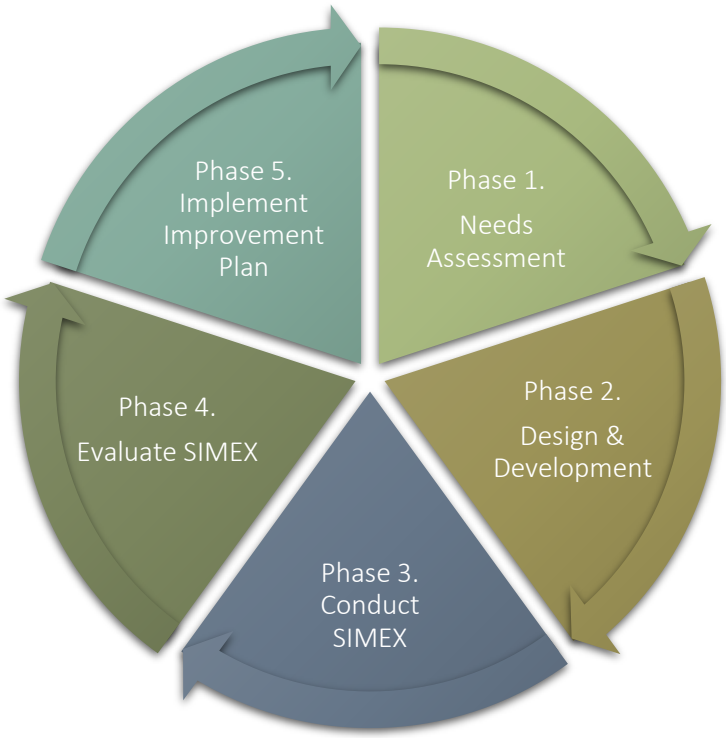


Figure 1.1 Simulation Exercise Project Cycle

Phase 1. Needs Assessment

During this phase, planners identify which critical functions, or **Essential Capabilities**, need to be tested and evaluated, what level or levels of personnel need to be evaluated, what type of simulation exercise would be best to exercise those capabilities, and how it will benefit the mission's integrated readiness and the overall

[2] Simulation Exercise Project Cycle is adapted from the European Union *Handbook on Simulation Exercises in EU Public Health Settings*; as well as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's *Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program*.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting programme. Definitions of these Essential Capabilities can be found in the companion document to this, the **Essential Capabilities for Crisis Management Manual.**

Phase 2. Design & Development

During this phase of the design cycle, simulation planners identify and develop objectives, design the scenario, create necessary supporting documents, plan the evaluation and ensure proper logistic support.

Phase 3. Conduct SIMEX

During this phase, the actual simulation exercise is conducted, activities are managed and post simulation debriefing occurs.

Phase 4. Evaluate SIMEX

During this phase, evaluation of performance against exercise objectives occurs; specifically as it relates to a mission's ability to successfully complete capabilities-based critical tasks in support of the exercise objectives. In addition, the observations relative to strengths and opportunities for improvement are explained in depth to provide the foundation for an improvement plan.

Phase 5. Implement Improvement Plan

Corrective actions for addressing gaps are agreed upon and a timeline for the implementation of these actions is established. Once corrective actions have been identified and work begins on addressing them including in mission planning, the crisis management focal point should begin to plan the next simulation exercise, considering ways to incorporate these corrective actions into the exercise in order to validate them. This process supports the continuous improvement process, and will contribute to the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting programme.

16 Essential Capabilities

1. Leadership
2. Decision-Making
3. Crisis Response & Management
4. Integrated Crisis Planning
5. Strategic Communications & Public Information
6. Information & Communication Technology
7. Protection of Civilians
8. Safety & Security of UN Personnel
9. Situational Awareness
10. Strategic Analysis
11. Resource Contingency Planning
12. Mass Casualty Management
13. Business Continuity Management
14. Support to Natural Disasters or Humanitarian Crisis
15. Human Resources Services
16. Support to Civilian Personnel & Families

These Improvement Plans should be viewed as benchmarks to work towards to ensure the system or the mission as a whole improves its integrated readiness. The identification of gaps and the need for corrective action should be viewed as tangible evidence of the leadership within a mission and their commitment to improving the preparedness for a crisis, to sustain the ability to fulfil the mandate and to ensure, within its means and capabilities, the safety and security of the staff and civilians they are charged with protecting.

Simulation Program Management

Simulation exercises should not be considered an isolated event; instead they are most beneficial when they are part of a well-thought-out exercise programme. The programme should reflect the requirements of the mandate, priorities of senior leadership, current threats and hazards. It should also consider a range of locations of SIMEX, particularly where missions cover substantial geographic responsibilities. The most effective way to achieve this is through the use of a multi-year mission Exercise Plan.

Developing the Mission Exercise Plan

The multi-year Mission Exercise Plan (MEP) should establish a progressive, building block approach to addressing identified threats and hazards, or requirements.

In the first step in developing the MEP the crisis management focal point should conduct a needs assessment by reviewing the key points outlined in Figure 1.2, including known threats and hazards, areas of risk and requirements. Based on these requirements, the focal point should make recommendations to the Mission Leadership Team and SRSG to gain endorsement for a strategy of exercises within the mission.

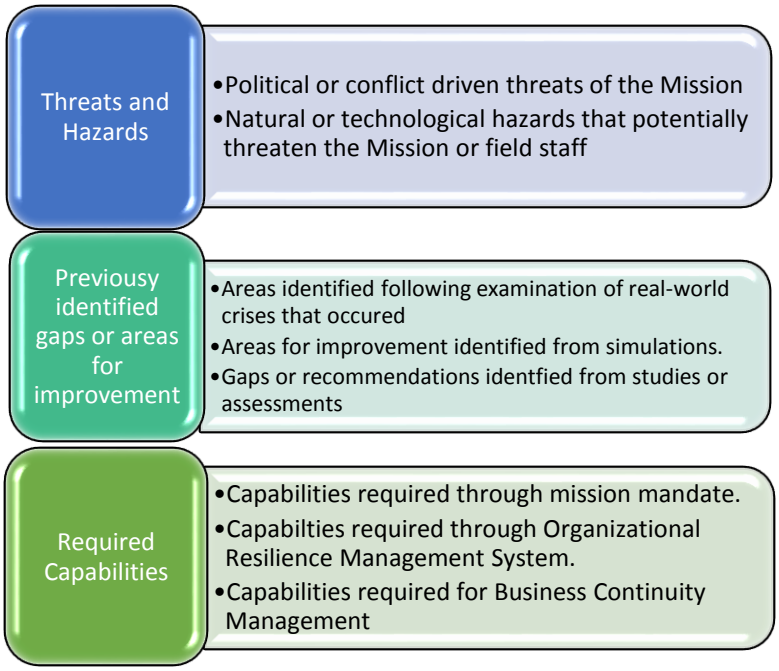


Figure 1.2 Simulation Priorities

When developing a multi-year strategy, the Crisis Management Focal Point needs to ensure that priorities generated by the mission are complementary to priorities being set in place by the ITS and IMTC. This way the mission and training services can work in concert to ensure the maximum benefit of effort for the mission.

Types of Simulation Exercises

There are two categories of simulation exercises: Discussion-Based and Operations-Based. As the name implies, during Discussion-Based Exercises, participants talk about scenarios and capabilities based on varied levels of intensity and realism. These simulations are often less complicated, easier to plan, and less expensive to run. Operations-Based Exercises involve evaluation of participants actually performing tasks in accordance with plans, procedures, and policies. In contrast to Discussion-Based

Exercises in which participants talk their way through the scenario, in Operations-Based Exercises participants are expected to perform the tasks as they would in a real-life situation.

Within those two categories, there are seven (7) types of exercises. **Annex A** provides additional information on the subtypes of exercises.

Discussion-Based Exercises	• Orientation • Workshop • Tabletop Exercise • Game
Operations-Based Exercises	• Drill • Functional Exercise • Full Scale Exercise

The primary focus of this manual will be on the development of a tabletop exercise (TTX) as they are the most flexible and cost-effective way to test a widespread crisis scenario at the strategic, operational, and tactical, and are the most likely to be enacted in a busy mission.

Exercises can be either *reactive* in which participants respond to the scenario as it is presented; or *proactive* in which participants work to develop contingency plans to address specific or anticipated needs of the crisis. It is important to consider which type of discussions the Exercise Planning Team would like the participants to have as the team is building the exercise.

Exercise Planning Team

Before setting out to undertake the task of developing the SIMEX, it is recommended that an **Exercise Planning Team** is established. The Exercise Planning Team is responsible for the development, conduct, and evaluation of the SIMEX. Exercise Planning Team members support the development of objectives, scenarios and injects; as well as serve in the capacities of Facilitators, Simulators, Controllers, and Evaluators as necessary. In order to ensure the objectivity of the design and evaluation, Exercise Planning Team members should not be Players in the exercise.

Keys to a Successful Exercise Planning Team

1. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, with a distinct chain of command and accountability for assigned tasks.
2. Incorporates senior leadership direction.
3. Project management techniques applied to ensure milestones are met.

4. Active engagement by all Planning Team members ensures critical documents are developed and the scenario is plausible, set at an appropriate level and engaging to exercise participants.
5. Subject matter experts, for the areas the SIMEX is addressing, are consulted to ensure adequate realism.
6. Ample time is allotted for exercise play.
7. Maintain the role of 'trusted agent', not sharing exercise information with potential participants to ensure most fair and comprehensive evaluation.

Key Simulation Planning Meetings

While not mandatory, best practice has shown that implementing a schedule of the following recommended SIMEX Planning Meetings helps to ensure the most efficient use of time and resources. Depending on the complexity and scale of the SIMEX, some of the following activities may not be needed.

Meeting	Recommended Time Line
Stakeholder Engagement Meeting	5 weeks before TTX
Initial Planning Meeting	1 month before TTX
Midterm Planning Meeting	2 weeks before TTX
Master Scenario Events List Synchronization	1 week before TTX
Final Planning Meeting	1 week before TTX
In-Progress Reviews	As needed

Times are based on a 30-day timeline for a simple TTX. Longer planning timelines should be used for more complex exercises. ***Give yourself ample time to plan!***

Annex B provides explanations and sample agendas for each of these meetings.

Section 2: Exercise Design Steps

Regardless of what type of SIMEX is being developed, there are eight basic design steps. The eight steps are:

1. Conduct a Needs Assessment
2. Define Scope
3. Establish Objectives
4. Create Scenario Narrative
5. Develop Major and Detailed Events
6. Identify Expected Actions

7. Write Injects
8. Construct Exercise Evaluation Guides

Step One: Conduct a Needs Assessment

This step can either be conducted as a stand-alone starting point to the SIMEX creation or as part of the development of a Multi-Year Training & Exercise Plan. During this assessment, review existing reports, studies and analyses to identify which Essential Capabilities are in most need practice. **Essential Capabilities** represent the most critical functions that need to be considered by a mission to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, or recover from a major crisis. Prioritizing these capabilities and selecting which to build a simulation exercise around provides structure to the scenario and evaluation criteria development. Refer to **Page 16** for a list of Essential Capabilities.

At the beginning of the simulation planning, it is recommended that the Exercise Planning Team conduct a Stakeholder Engagement Meeting to receive input on capabilities to validate. For a strategic or operational level simulation exercise, stakeholders could invite to such meetings: CMT, representatives from the UNCT, Agencies, Funds and Programmes, Host Country authorities and NGOs.

A list of these essential functions has been articulated in the **DPKO's Essential Capabilities for Crisis Management Manual.** Input from the senior leadership within a mission will also be critical at this point. Helpful documents to review to identify priority Essential Capabilities include:

- Recommendations from IOT, ITS and IMTC
- Mission mandate and mission concept
- Status of Forces Agreement, Status of Mission Agreement, or equivalent
- UNSMS Security Policy Manual policies
- Organisational Resilience Management System Doctrine
- UNDPKO Essential Capabilities for Crisis Management Manual
- After Action Reports from real world crises or previous simulation exercises
- Business Continuity Management Plans
- Situation Analysis Reports for current political and conflict threats
- Security Risk Management processes in-country (country and area specific)

Step Two: Define Scope

In order to maintain a well-organised, efficient SIMEX that can produce substantial recommendations for improving the performance of a mission in a crisis, it is important to define the Scope of the SIMEX. The Scope should address the "Who, What, When, Where, Why" of the SIMEX, and properly communicate the intention of the SIMEX to senior leadership and participants. This also helps to set the parameters for what the SIMEX is and is not evaluating.

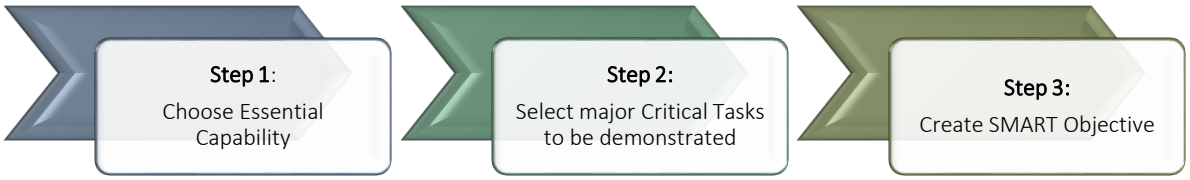
At the strategic level, these activities may include leadership, decision-making, political coordination, personnel safety and security, resource allocation and management, strategic communications, and reputational management.

Components of the Scope

Element of Scope	Definition
Capabilities	What Essential Capabilities will be addressed in this SIMEX?
Specific Actions	From within the Essential Capabilities, which actions or tasks are going to be evaluated?
Level of Participants	What level of participants will be expected to participate (i.e. CMT, OCB, etc.)? This helps to ensure the right people are invited and attend the simulation.
Type of SIMEX and Duration	What type of SIMEX will this be (i.e. TTX, FX, FSX), what level of complexity is intended, and how long is it intended to last?
Hazard	What is the risk or threat at the centre of the scenario?
Location	Where is this risk or crisis occurring?
Example:	This SIMEX will evaluate the capabilities of Leadership, Crisis Response & Management, and Mass Casualty Management in a 2-hour, medium stress TTX. This SIMEX will examine actions such as coordination with Host Country authorities, establishing casualty collection points, and arranging aeromedical evacuation in response to a complex coordinated attack at the MONUSCO Compound in Kinshasa.

Step Three: Establish Objectives

Establishing clearly defined objectives is extremely useful in creating a structure for the SIMEX that allows for focused discussion around a plausible scenario, efficient use of time, and actionable improvement recommendations. Developing objectives is actually a multi-step process.



Choose Essential Capability

From the DPKO Essential Capabilities Manual, select the Essential Capability or Capabilities to focus the SIMEX on. How many capabilities to choose should be dependent upon (a) results of the Needs Assessment and Senior Leadership direction; (b) how much time has been allotted for the SIMEX, and (c) which participants will be taking part in the SIMEX. Essential Capabilities should be relevant to the intended participants. For instance, do not select a Mass Casualty capability if no medical personnel will be participating in the exercise.

Good Practice: If you are new to simulation design, consider only choosing one or two Capabilities in order to keep the focus narrower and easier to develop and evaluate.

Select Major Critical Tasks to be Demonstrated

In the DPKO Essential Capabilities Manual there are associated major Critical Tasks for each Essential Capability. These represent the major functions associated with each capability that field missions should be able to perform in a crisis in order to protect lives and continue to fulfil the mandate. Associated tasks can be chosen for a Discussion-Based Exercise or perform in an Operations-Based Exercise. Similar to limiting the number of Essential Capabilities to be evaluated, it is a Good Practice to limit the number of major Critical Tasks to be evaluated. Evaluation staff for the SIMEX will need to be selected, so Critical Tasks will need to be limited accordingly. For instance, it might not be advisable to try to evaluate 10 Critical Tasks when you will only be provided 2 Evaluators.

Create SMART Objective

Once the major actions have been selected, it is time to create SMART objectives for them. Objectives form the basis of (a) the scenario, (b) the discussion questions and injects, and (c) Exercise Evaluation Guidelines. Clearly defined objectives follow the SMART principle:

SMART Objectives	
Specific	Objectives should specify "Who is doing What under What Conditions in accordance with What Standard."
Measurable	Objectives should have outcomes that are observable and measurable.
Achievable	Objectives should be achievable within the construct of the exercise; based on time allotted, exercise design, and resources present.
Relevant	Objectives should be linked to goals, intents, authorities, and capabilities of the participating agencies and Players.
Time-bound	During **Operations-Based Exercises,** a specified and reasonable timeframe for the completion of objectives should be included. Time jumps can be considered if they help with drawing out specific training objectives.

SMART Objective Examples	
Choose Essential Capability	Situational Awareness
Select Major Critical Task to be Demonstrated	Ensure that appropriate notifications to internal and external stakeholders are made regarding crisis situation and field mission actions.
Create SMART Objective	
Discussion-Based Exercise	Discuss the process for the mission to develop and maintain exchange of information with Regional/Sector HQs following a major attack on the Compound in accordance with Mission Standard Operating Procedure.
Operations-Based Exercise	The mission will establish and maintain the exchange of situational awareness with Regional/Sector HQs within 1 hour of an attack on the Compound in accordance with the mission Standard Operating Procedure.

Step Four Create Scenario Narrative

The scenario is the setting and context that create the conditions for participants to consider and apply plans and procedures to resolve. In a Discussion-Based Exercise, the scenario provides context for the discussions, and is contained in the Situation Manual (SitMan). For Operations-Based Exercises, the scenario is the catalyst that the Exercise Planning Team is creating, including sequenced injects and physical developments in the field. The first step in developing the scenario is the Scenario Narrative. This sets the stage for whatever problems will be presented to the participants. Consider this the **background information**. As the exercise will be looking to create a 'real world – near future' in some form to create the problems participants need to resolve, it is helpful to provide background information on the simulated events that you are creating.

Good Practice: To enhance the realism consider the following:

- Incorporate a political analyst as a subject matter expert to create a realistic backstory
- Use real briefing templates to deliver the message to create a realistic feeling
- Focus the information only on what will set up those Target Capabilities you will be evaluating
- Acknowledge any limitations or artificialities at the start of the simulation to focus player attention where you want it to be

The Scenario Narrative might include:

- The developing political climate and details of a growing unrest
- Details on fictional atrocities or terrorist attacks
- Natural disaster warning indicators or relevant information on weather
- Introduction to key simulated exercise characters and/or groups

Above all, the Scenario Narrative should provide enough information to allow the participants to understand "why am I here?". The Narrative provides all necessary details up to the point where the crisis begins, or the catalyst is introduced before further developments are injected.

The narrative should also address any necessary **Artificialities** that need to be created in order to properly create the conditions for your evaluation. For instance: if Province B would likely be affected by the growing political violence in your scenario but you only want participants to focus on Province A, that artificiality should be told to Players in the Scenario Narrative.

The development of the scenario should involve the mission's respective IOT in order to ensure that the scenario is plausible, challenging, and relevant, while incorporating current threats and trends. The IOT can also be useful in ensuring the appropriate level of HQ participation is scheduled to make the simulation successful.

Political Considerations!

When developing a SIMEX it is important to remember that you may be creating a scenario that, while only intended to enable you to practice, may contain activities or details that could be mistaken for negative criticism of the Host Government, its intentions, or even personal character. Ensure you take appropriate steps to safeguard scenario documents and to reinforce at every opportunity that this is for training and exercise purposes only. Assume that your documents may be released at some point and always consider potential implications in engagement and reputational terms, for the Mission.

Step Five: Develop Major and Detailed Events

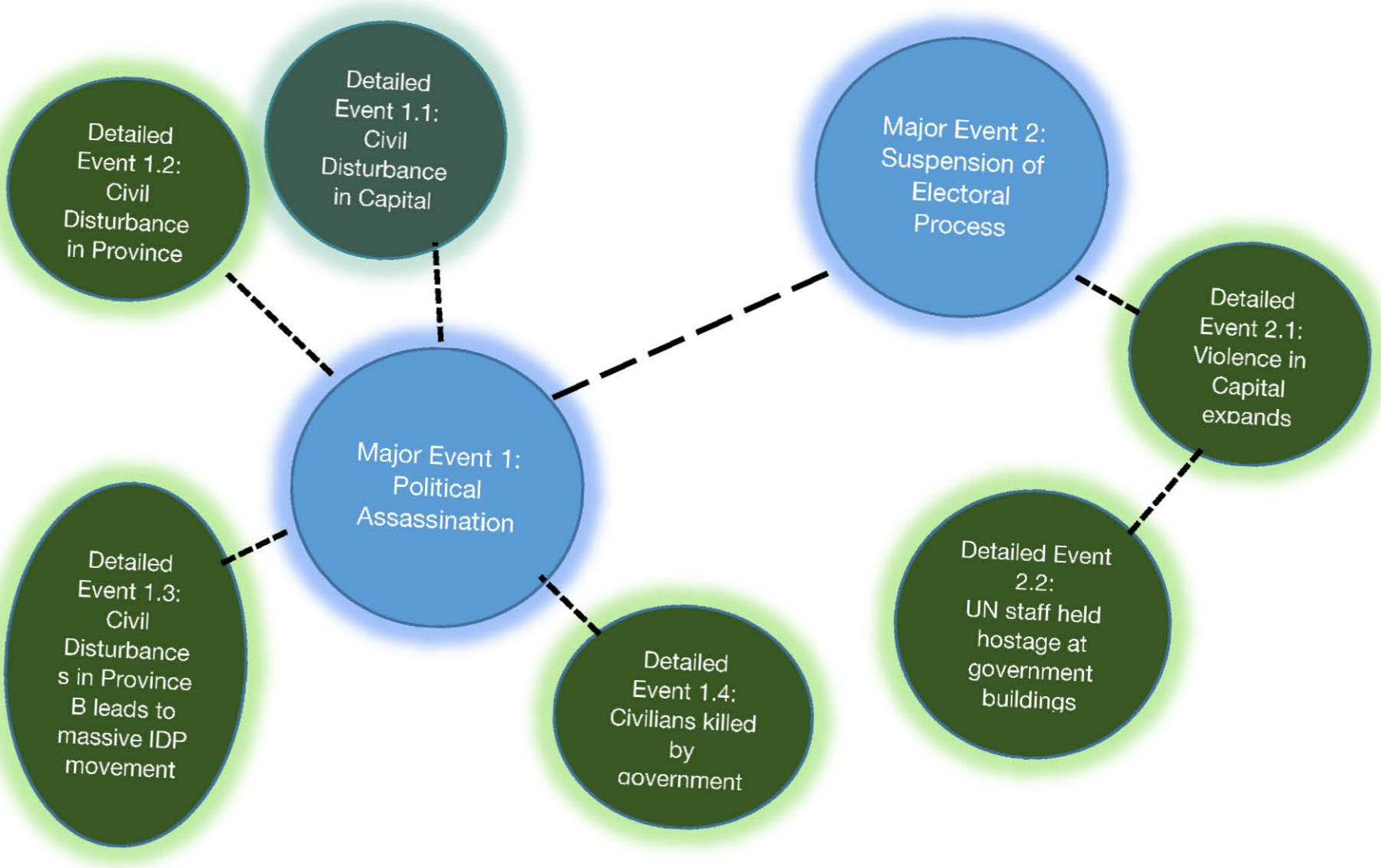
Once the Scenario Development has set the conditions that set up the crisis for the participants, it is time to develop a catalyst that creates the crisis and drives Players towards discussing or conducting the tasks you are planning to evaluate. Similar to a movie director who creates a storyboard to outline the scenes of a film, it is useful to develop a similar storyboard to outline the simulated crisis, and the major problems you want to challenge your Players with. These are accomplished in the form of **Major** and **Detailed Events**.

Major Events are the significant challenges that will drive the story. These result from the crisis that the scenario is based on. Each major event should be related to one or more of the SIMEX objectives. Providing Players with unrelated major events that draw their attention away from where it needs to be should be a part of the exercise.

Detailed Events are smaller challenges that result from the Major Events. These can be used to reinforce the focus on the exercise objectives, to prompt additional actions to be practiced, to help simulate realistic conditions and to ensure that all participants are engaged as much as possible.

The specifics of these Events will be conveyed to the Players in **injects**, which will be discussed in Step 7.

Example of Major and Detailed Events



Step Six: Identifying Expected Actions

Expected Actions are those that you want or need the participants to discuss or demonstrate in order to meet the objectives of the SIMEX. Expected Actions are tied to the **Critical Tasks.**

Each **Major** and **Detailed Event** should have associated **Expected Actions**. The Exercise Planning Team should ask themselves "Why am I telling the Players this? What do I want them to do?" **Expected Actions** are not discussed with the Players in advance but form the basis for evaluation during and after the SIMEX.

Expected Actions can be found in the Crisis Management Plans, Standard Operating Procedures, policies and other documents that provide standards and guidance for managing or recovering from a crisis.

Critical Task	Possible Expected Actions
Provide emergency trauma care to casualties.	Establish casualty collection point.
	Perform rapid triage of casualties.
	Demonstrate effective use of bleeding control measures.
	Arrange for transportation to Level 1 trauma centre. This includes emergency air transport – and the associated logistic support (such as additional flying hours, fuel and maintenance requirements, and night flying authorisation).

At this stage, compile a list of the actions that Players are expected to perform. These will become the basis for the Exercise Injects in Step 7.

Step Seven: Write Injects

Injects are previously-prepared messages or occurrences that prompt Players to take action. These should prompt the Players to perform the tasks or discuss the issues to be evaluated *without actually telling* the Players directly. These are the specifics of the **Major** and **Detail Events** conveyed to participants in a variety of methods. **Injects** should be written as realistically as possible; and in Operations-Based Exercises they should be delivered in a manner as close to real world as possible. For example, a simulated TV or radio news bulletin could be used to spark an inject.

Helpful Suggestion: When developing an exercise for the CMT, load all the relevant information into the scenario. The CMT should conduct the exercise like a CMT-meeting for a real crisis, therefore there should be little need for additional injects to advance participant discussion. Provide them with the key issues to focus

Injects can be delivered in a variety of means, usually based on the creativity and resources available to the Exercise Planning Team. How they are delivered will also vary depending on the type of SIMEX that is being conducted and how much realism is desired.

Consider using a variety of methods of delivering messages in order to make the SIMEX more engaging. For Discussion-Based Exercises, injects could be simple statements that prompt discussion on their own, or that can be used to set up a discussion question.

For more realistic exercises, such as Functional Exercises or Full-Scale Exercises, injects should be delivered in a way that will mirror reality as closely as possible. This could be:

- Telephone calls
- Emails
- Simulated Situation Reports
- Maps
- Videos
- Radio transmissions
- Role Players

For an example of Discussion-Based Exercise Injects, refer to **Annex B**.

For an example of Operations-Based Exercise Injects and a MSEL, refer to **Annex C**.

Injects for **Operations-Based Exercises** are first written in a format that should address the following elements:

Time	What time do you want the message delivered
To	What Player is supposed to get the message
From	Who within the scenario is supposedly sending the message
Method	What is the method used to deliver the message (i.e. phone, email, actor, etc.)
Summary	A brief description of the inject which will help identify the inject amongst all the others when the exercise is finished
Message	This is the exact wording of the message is to be delivered. The message must be written exactly the way it stated so, whoever is delivering the message does not inadvertently provide bad or unclear information to the Players.
Expected Actions	What actions are intended from this inject to stimulate activity by the Players that will be evaluated

Political Consideration!
Any **Inject**, **exercise document,** or **radio/telephone transmission** during the SIMEX should include the disclaimer of "**Simulation Only**" or "**Exercise, Exercise, Exercise**" in order to avoid misunderstanding with people outside of the SIMEX who may inadvertently receive that information, including Host Governments.

Injects for an **Operations-Based Exercise** are collated and organized in the **Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)**. This document serves as the script by which simulation staff, Controllers and other exercise staff will conduct the simulation exercise.

Step Eight – Contract Exercise Evaluation Guides

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEG) provide a standardized format for data collection during a simulation exercise. These forms are aligned to the Essential Capabilities, Critical Tasks, Objectives, and Expected Actions you intend to evaluate during the SIMEX. By utilizing this consistent approach, it will enable your Evaluators to more easily identify observations that can be compiled into your After Action Report and recommend improvement actions linked to Essential Capabilities.

The following are key components of an Exercise Evaluation Guide:

1. **Critical Task**. These Critical Tasks represent the key benchmarks you are evaluating in the exercise. These can be identified from the Essential Capabilities Manual or mission mandate, policies, procedures, etc.
2. **Expected Actions**. These are the actions or discussions you have identified in Step Six above (Identifying Expected Actions). These actions or discussions from Step Six should be arranged to align with their corresponding Critical Task; and represent the criteria for whether or not the participants successfully completed the Critical Tasks.
3. **Observation Notes and Explanation of Rating**. This box allows your Evaluator to explain his/her thoughts and observations pertaining to the Expected Action. The Evaluator should explain any strengths or gaps observed. This box should also contain any recommendations for addressing gaps or for sustaining the strengths observed. The Evaluators should be asking themselves, "If they didn't perform the task, how can we correct that in the future? And if they performed the tasks well, how can we sustain that success in the future?"
4. **Task Rating.** Here the Evaluator provides a judgement of how well the Expected Action was performed.

Rating	Discussion-Based Exercise Explanation	Operations-Based Exercise Explanation
Pass (P)	From the discussions participants were able to demonstrate comfort and knowledge of the plans. No potential gaps or shortfalls are anticipated.	Participants performed the task with *no challenges*.
Some (S)	From the discussions, *some* potential gaps or shortfalls are anticipated; participants showed *some* unfamiliarity with plans and procedures.	Participants were able to perform the task, but *some* challenges were encountered.
Many (M)	From the discussions, *many* potential gaps or shortfalls are anticipated; participants showed more unfamiliarity with plans and procedures.	Participants were able to perform the task, but *many* challenges were encountered.
Unable (U)	Discussions suggest that the mission would be *unable* to perform that task; OR Facilitators were *unable* to include that discussion in the exercise.	Participants were *unable* to perform that task. This should include an explanation of why not (was it due to training, equipment, exercise design flaws, not enough time, etc.)

Sample Exercise Evaluation Guide

1 Critical Task	2 Expected Actions	Observation Notes and Explanation of Rating	4 Task Rating
Convene Crisis Management Team within 15 minutes of an emergency.	1. Establishes an effective CMT structure to manage the incident and meet objectives	*CMT was activated within 15 minutes of being notified of an attack.*	**P**
	2. Establishes reporting processes to the CMT and ensures clarity of roles, responsibilities and capabilities	*The majority of CMT members were comfortable with their roles and responsibilities, though some were new and require additional training. Not all personnel had access to necessary plans and files while operating in command centre.*	**S**
	3. Establishes and maintains a common operating picture regarding all aspects of a developing crisis and associated response, including relevant maps and other geographical information and reports this to SMT	*CMT did not have the ability to develop maps that demonstrated key areas of the crisis. Only basic maps, using products like Google Earth ™ were available. Recommend assigning someone with geospatial information systems capabilities to be part of the CMT*	**M**
	4. Provides situational updates related to the crisis situation to the SRSG, SMT, and UNHQ relevant departments and crisis support units.	*Reporting structures and times were not followed. Some personnel did not know when the SRSG or UNOCC should be notified. Unable to establish VTC with UNOCC due to internet connectivity issues.*	**M**

Summary

This manual is intended to provide guidance and tools to the Crisis Management Focal Points within the field missions for creating consistent, beneficial, and realistic simulation exercises at the strategic and operational levels. The principles outlined can be utilised to create any type of exercise, providing flexibility and versatility in the use of simulation exercises as a way to improve all aspects of mission readiness and resilience.

Simulation exercises should not be seen as a measure of or reflection of personal performance, but rather as tangible evidence of the commitment of the mission leadership to improving safety, performance, and resiliency of the system as a whole. Simulation exercises around the world, whether they are oriented towards military or civilian responders, have proven the undeniable fact that **exercises enhance performance and save lives**. Emphasis on quality simulation exercises can better prepare the Crisis Management Team and staff to anticipate and address potential challenges during a crisis which would otherwise hinder the ability of the mission to fulfil its mandate. While it is not possible to always identify what the next crisis will be, a focus on improving common and essential capabilities through exercise can strengthen the performance and resiliency of the mission.

Key Definitions

Term	Description
Actor	Actors are volunteers who assist the simulation exercise by playing specific roles, such as casualties, to enhance the realism of the exercise.
After Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)	The AAR/IP summarizes the key findings of the simulation exercise, including an explanation of observations of strengths and areas for improvement. This also includes recommendations for improving the capabilities of the field mission.
Contextual Inject	Contextual injects are the primary messages delivered to the Players to create the conditions that will keep exercise play and discussions going.
Contingency Inject	Contingency injects are events or messages the Controller provides to Players if the Players do not take the action that is necessary for evaluation.
Controller	In an operations-based exercise, the Controller helps to plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the hands-on evolutions, and possibly assume the role of any agency or person not actually participating in the simulation exercise in order to enhance realism and keep the exercise moving.
Controller / Evaluator Handbook (C/E Handbook)	The C/E Handbook is a document developed for Controllers, Evaluators, and Simulators for operations-based exercises which contain the full simulation exercise information – including objectives, communications plan, safety plan, scenario details, Master Scenario Events List, and Exercise Evaluation Guides.
Corrective Actions	Corrective actions are the actions described in the AAR/IP that are intended to improve gaps or shortcomings experienced during the simulation exercise.
Crisis	An incident or situation, whether natural or human-made, that due to its magnitude, complexity, or gravity of potential consequence, requires a UN-wide coordinated multi-disciplinary response, and includes two or more of the following: a) presents an exceptional risk to the safety and security of UN personnel, premises, and assets, b) presents an exceptional threat to the effective functioning of a UN mission or other field presence, c) presents an exceptional threat to the effective implementation of the mandate of a UN mission or other field presence, d) may have a significantly negative humanitarian impact, or e) may give rise to serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law.
Crisis Management	Decision-making in support of the identification, prioritisation, coordination and execution of crisis response activities.
Crisis Response	The spectrum of activities undertaken to respond to a crisis situation.
Critical Tasks	These are major tasks required to successfully perform an Essential Capability. These are derived from standard operational procedures or other discipline-specific standards. They represent an indicator of how well the system demonstrated the performance of the Capabilities during the exercise.
Debriefing	The Debriefing is a facilitated discussion at the end of a simulation exercise that enables the Exercise Planning Team to capture feedback about issues, concerns, or lessons learned by the participants.
Drill	A Drill is a form of operations-based exercise used to provide training on new equipment, develop or validate new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills.

Essential Capability	These are the distinct critical elements necessary to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from a crisis. These enable preparedness and improvement planners, as well as simulation designers to set benchmarks against which the success of a mission can be measured in the event of a crisis.
Evaluator	Evaluators are members of the Exercise Planning Team that are assigned to measure and assess performance, capture unresolved issues, and analyse exercise results.
Exercise Director	The Exercise Director is the member of the Exercise Planning Team who is ultimately responsible for coordinating the planning, conduct, and evaluation activities to ensure a successful simulation exercise.
Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG)	The Exercise Evaluation Guide is a tool developed for Evaluators which lists all of the critical tasks to be evaluated, providing Evaluators with a standardized data collection tool to support the After Action review process.
Exercise Plan (ExPlan)	The ExPlan is the document provided to the Players during an operations-based exercise which provides all the information they will need to operate safely in the simulation – to include objectives, communication plan, and safety plan.
Exercise Planning Team	The Exercise Planning Team are the personnel responsible for the planning, conduct, and evaluation of a simulation exercise.
Facilitator	The Facilitator is responsible for leading participant discussions during a discussion-based exercise, including making sure discussions stay within the objectives of the exercise.
Final Planning Meeting	The Final Planning Meeting is conducted for all simulation exercises. It provides the Exercise Planning Team with an opportunity to ensure all logistical, administrative, and documentation issues have been finalized and ready for the exercise.
Full Scale Exercise (FSE)	Full Scale Exercises involve the actual demonstration of tasks, involving multiple agencies, organisations, and jurisdictions to validate multiple capabilities. The Full-Scale Exercise is typically a field-level exercise.
Functional Exercise (FE)	Functional Exercises involve the operation of command and coordination centres in response to a simulated crisis. They do not typically involve the deployment of actual resources but require participants to perform command and coordination functions in a high-stress and realistic environment.
Game	A Game is a form of simulation that often involves individuals or small unit teams, usually in a competitive or role-playing environment with rules and procedures designed to depict an actual situation.
Ground Truth Document	The Ground Truth Document contains the full detailed elements of the scenario that must remain constant during the exercise development and conduct to ensure information in Functional Exercises is delivered is a consistent manner.
Initial Planning Meeting (IPM)	The Initial Planning Meeting marks the beginning of the formal planning process for the simulation exercise. During this meeting, exercise planners determine design requirements, logistics, potential challenges, documents needed, finalize objectives, and set a timeline for planning.
Inject	The Injects are the scripted messages delivered to the Players that seek to prompt participants to implement plans, procedures, or actions the Exercise Planning Team seeks to validate or evaluate.
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)	The Master Scenario Events List is the timeline of injects and their corresponding expected actions that the Exercise Planning Team
Midterm Planning Meeting	The Midterm Planning Meeting is used to provide a midpoint review of exercise planning activity.

Mission Exercise Plan (MEP)	The Mission Exercise Plan is a multi-year projection of simulation exercise needs and/or anticipated exercises for a two to three-year period.
Objectives	Objectives are desired outcomes the exercise planners wish to achieve or evaluate during a simulation exercise. Objectives provide structure for exercise discussions and the basis for exercise evaluation.
Observer	Observer is someone who in attendance of an exercise but does not directly participate in discussions or evaluated activities.
Orientation	An orientation provides an overview to a plan, procedure, threat, or other crisis related topic. As an exercise it provides an introduction to the topic, such as defining roles and responsibilities for new staff. There is no evaluation with a seminar.
Participant	Participant is the broad group that includes anyone attending an exercise; including Players, Observers, Controllers, and Evaluators.
Participant Feedback Form	Participant Feedback Form is a tool used to collect anonymous feedback from participants which can be used for the After Action Report or improving delivery of future simulation exercises.
Player	Player refers to the participants that are being evaluated for the simulation exercise. Typically, this would be the CMT and OCB for mission exercises, but could include personnel from organisations such as UNCT, AFP, or Host Country response authorities.
Scenario	The scenario provides the storyline for the exercise, setting the tone for the exercise and prompting discussions or actions.
Scope	Scope refers to the key elements in the construct of the exercise, including defining what level of discussions will be had, what major activities will be tested, and how long the exercise is scheduled to last.
Simulation Cell (SimCell)	The SimCell provides injects for Players in a Functional or Full-Scale Exercise. It also responds to Player requests and actions and simulates any organisation that is not actually playing in the exercise.
Simulation Exercise	An instrument to train for, assess, practice, and improve the performance of mission policy implementation, procedures, plans, and staff in a no-fault, risk-free environment. Simulation Exercises (SIMEX) can be used to test and validate policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, and inter-agency cooperation; clarify and train personnel in roles and responsibilities; improve communication between different elements of a mission; improve individual performance and confidence; identify gaps in planning and resources, and opportunities to improve the overall resilience of a mission.
Simulators	Simulators are exercise support staff who play the role of organisations not participating in the functional or full-scale exercise. They operate the SimCell.
Situation Manual (SitMan)	The SitMan provides Players in a tabletop exercise with additional scenario information and serves as reference material throughout the discussions.
Stakeholder Engagement Meeting	A Stakeholder Engagement Meeting is the beginning of the simulation exercise planning process in which planners meet with internal and relevant external stakeholders to identify the type, scope and objectives of the simulation exercise.
Tabletop Exercise (TTX)	A TTX is a discussion-based exercise evaluating various Critical Tasks in a low- to moderate-stress environment. All evaluation is achieved through facilitated discussion, and all actions are hypothetical.
Workshop	A workshop is a facilitated discussion aimed at developing a product, such as a revision to an existing policy; or the creation of a new plan such as a contingency plan for an upcoming election or a Mission Exercise Plan. Workshops can utilise scenarios to enhance planning by adding context to discussions.

Annex A.
Determining the Right Type of Exercise

While most field missions will conduct TTX at the strategic and operational levels, the principles set forth in this manual could be used to develop any type of simulation exercise, thereby allowing the Crisis Management Focal Point to develop a progressively challenging and diverse exercise programme to further improve the capabilities of the mission to respond to crises.

This Annex will provide additional information on the various types of simulation exercises, including logistical considerations and helpful documents for each.

Discussion-Based Exercises

As the name implies, during Discussion-Based Exercises, participants talk about scenarios and capabilities based on varied levels of stress and realism. These simulations are often less complicated, easier to plan, and less expensive to run. The sub-categories of Discussion-Based Exercises are:

- Orientation
- Workshop
- Tabletop Exercise
- Game

Helpful Suggestion: The CMT is best exercised in a **Tabletop** format.

	Orientation	Workshop	Tabletop Exercise	Game
Characteristics	Participants receive information in a classroom or briefing format. Generally, no expectation for the participants to provide input other than asking clarifying questions.	A low-stress, facilitated discussion for the purpose of developing or refining some type of plan, procedure, or other product. Often scenario-based to place discussions in a context. Participants are generally not evaluated on their performance as these are intended to use the participants' knowledge and experience to develop a product that might not have existed before or strengthen an already existing one	A tabletop exercise (TTX) is a structured, scenario-based discussion used to evaluate capabilities. This differs from a workshop in that it is evaluating existing plans and procedures, so there is typically a minor to moderate level of stress on participants. Requires structured methodology for facilitation and evaluation of discussions. Can range from simple question and answer sessions to elaborate discussions driven by pre-scripted exercise messages called injects.	Usually conducted at the individual or small team level, in an interactive environment. Similar to playing a sport or board game at home, there is a "right" and "wrong" way to perform tasks, and there are rules for how the individual or team should operate in the game. Constructive feedback should be provided at the end of the game on how to improve individual or team performance.
Examples	Can be used to brief staff on new plans or procedures, or to review existing plans. Excellent tool for providing orientation to new supervisors and staff members on their roles and responsibilities in a crisis.	Gathering key stakeholders to develop a Mission Exercise Plan. Using a scenario-based discussion to prepare a contingency plan for potential electoral violence.	Conduct a facilitated, evaluated discussion to assess the preparedness of UNDPKO to respond to the outbreak of civil disturbance in an urban environment.	Virtual reality-based gaming for responding to active gunmen. Role playing to practice interpersonal conflict resolution.

Operations-Based Exercises

Operations-Based Exercises involve evaluation of participants actually performing tasks in accordance with plans, procedures, and policies. In contrast to Discussion-Based Exercises in which participants talk their way through the scenario, in Operations-Based Exercises participants are expected to perform the tasks as they would in a real-life situation. Some variants may be required to account for level of participation of other agencies and safety of the participants. The sub-categories of Operations-Based Exercises are:

- Drill
- Functional Exercise
- Full Scale Exercise

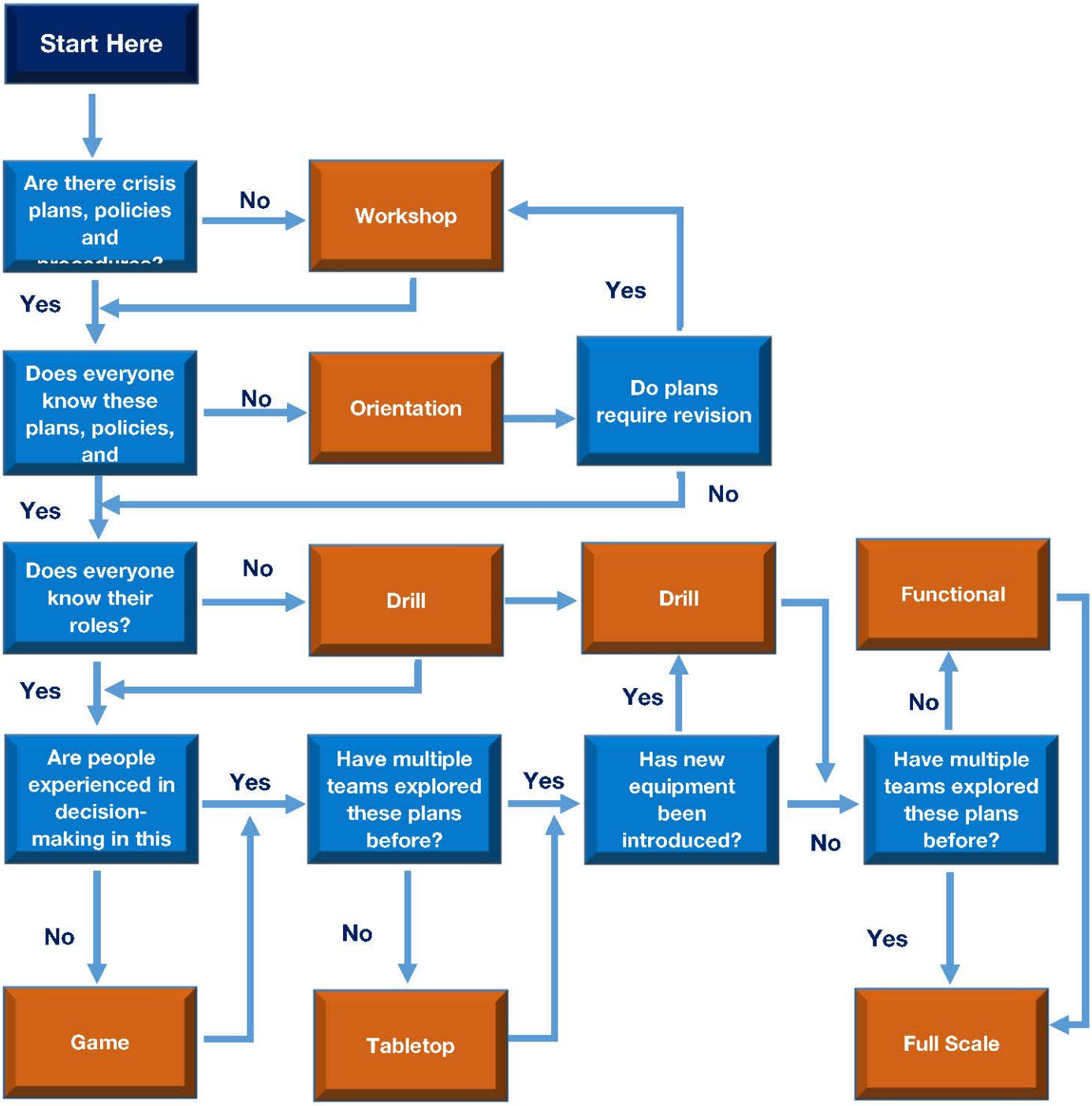
Helpful Suggestion: The OCB is best exercised in a **Tabletop or Functional** format.

	Drill	Functional Exercise (FX)	Full Scale Exercise (FSX)
Characteristic	A coordinated, supervised activity used to validate a specific function or task, often through repetition. Usually testing a single task. Require clearly defined plans, procedures and policies to be in place in order to have the basis to drill on.	A fully simulated, interactive exercise that tests the ability of an agency to respond to a scenario. Test multiple functions of the agency, and often in conjunction with other agencies or stakeholders. Should be designed to be a realistic, stressful environment that requires participants to perform as they would in a real event. Rely heavily on well-scripted and choreographed messages called injects to drive the play. Typically focuses on the Command Post, or coordination bodies such as the Crisis Management Team. Resources outside of the Command Post / CMT may not actually be deployed.	Test plans and procedures at the operational, or field level. Personnel and resources are mobilised and deployed to the scene, and actions are then performed in real time. Validate multiple functions and tasks. Can be very resource intensive and requires more planning for logistical and safety considerations that other exercises. May conducted in conjunction with a Functional Element to add a field component and enhance realism. Relies on props, actors, and other simulation aids to convey realism.
Examples	An agency testing a single function, such as: A regularly scheduled fire evacuation drill. A test of the staff notification systems.	The Crisis Management Team and UN Operations and Crisis Centre are activated to evaluate the flow of information and decision-making between the two entities.	The mission conducts a full scale exercise to deploy medical teams to respond to a simulated attack; and evaluates the establishment of casualty collection points.

Comparison of Exercise Subtypes

Type	Planning Time	Planning Support	Conduct Support	Evaluation Support	Stress Level for Players	Logistical Requirements	Financial Requirements	Safety Concerns
Orientation	>1 month	Minimal	Facilitators Presenters	N/A	N/A	Room AV Support	Low	N/A
Workshop	1-2 months	Minimal	Facilitator Co-Facilitators	Note-takers	Low	Room AV Support Materials printed	Low	N/A
Tabletop Exercise	1-3 months	Moderate	Facilitator Co-Facilitators Role Players (optional)	Evaluators Note-takers	Low	Room AV Support Materials printed	Low to Moderate	N/A
Game	>1 month	Minimal	Facilitator Role Players (optional)	Evaluator	Low	Room AV Support	Low to moderate	N/A
Drill	>1 month	Minimal	Lead Controller Controllers Safety Officer (optional) Role Players (optional)	Note-takers	Low	Drill location Equipment Props	Low	Moderate depending on functions being tested
Functional Exercise	6 months	Large	Lead Controller Controllers Simulation Cell Role Players (optional)	Evaluators	Moderate to High	Command Post AV Support Props Simulation Aids Radios/Phones	Moderate	N/A
Full Scale Exercise	6 – 12 months	Large	Lead Controller Controllers Safety Officer Role Players Simulation Cell (optional)	Evaluators – at least one per venue and/or capability	High	Location Props Equipment Simulation Aids Radios/Phones Safety (ambulance, water, etc.)	Moderate to Large	High depending on functions. Need for detailed safety plan and risk reduction measures

Flowchart to Determine Right Type of Exercise[3]



[3] Fagel, M. (2014). Crisis Management and Emergency Planning: Preparing for Today's Challenges. Boca Raton, FL. CRC Press. p. 304

Comparison of Benefits and Limitations of Exercises

Exercise Type	Benefits	Limitations
Orientation	• Low stress • Low cost • Little preplanning needed • Can provide orientation to new procedures, plans, or policies.	• Little to no data collection on areas for improvement
Workshop	• Low stress • Low cost • Little time pressure in discussions • Excellent way to collaborate to develop a new plan or other product • Can help in identifying areas to improve on	• Simple scenarios or discussions do not stress or overwhelm the system
Tabletop	• Minimal stress for participants • Low cost • Little time pressure in discussions, allowing for more collaboration in problem solving • Discussions can talk through existing plans and procedures to identify issues • Most flexible of exercise types	• Difficult to adequately represent strain or stress on the system • Often lacks realism • Requires a good Facilitator • Presence of supervisors may make subordinates nervous about speaking up • Can be challenging with a large number of people
Games	• Low stress • Can focus on individual performance assessment and improvement • Can leverage role playing or technology to enhance realism	• Requires adherence to rules of play (similar to sporting or board games) • Limited to individual or small unit assessment • Might require small support staff
Drill	• Moderate stress through actual activity rather than discussion • Can be used to evaluate specific mechanisms and functions • Repetition builds confidence • Can be used for individual confidence or small unit team-building	• Typically, only tests or builds on one function or procedure at a time • Can have an increase in safety issues with people actually performing tasks • Hard to test multiple functions while still creating a collaborative learning environment
Functional	• Moderate to high stress on individuals as it strives to simulate realistic conditions through injects and interaction with simulation staff • Lower cost as field units are not deployed (only simulated) • Allows for better demonstration of accountability and decision-making and processes within the command post or command centre • Allows testing of multiple functions and tasks at once	• Requires extensive planning to ensure scenario is realistic and detailed enough to stimulate desired actions • Requires larger support staff, particularly to manage the delivery of injects and simulate agencies who are not actually participating
Full Scale	• Moderate to high stress on individuals through actual performance of field tasks • As close to “real” as they will get without a real crisis • Excellent way to test interagency communications and coordination	• Requires extensive planning to ensure scenario and field evolutions are realistic and detailed enough to stimulate desired actions • Expensive due to field deployment of resources • Requires more intensive safety planning • Requires larger support staff, particularly with Role Players • Usually draws media or public attention

The following are examples of how various exercise types could be used to develop a building block approach for an exercise program.

Example of a Building Block Approach – Business Continuity Management

Month	Exercise Type	Description
Jan.2018	**Orientation**	Provide key BCM personnel with an overview of the BCM plan and their roles and responsibilities.
May 2018	**Drill**	Conduct a notification drill to ensure contact information for all BCM personnel is up-to-date.
Sept. 2018	**Tabletop**	Discussion-based exercise evaluating the current BCM plan.
Dec. 2018	**Drill**	Conduct a notification drill to have BCM personnel report to command centre and test communication with UNHQ.
Apr. 2019	**Functional**	Establish command centre and simulate a business continuity crisis in which participants must manage time critical services under austere or impacted conditions.

Example of a Building Block Approach – Mass Casualty Management

Month	Exercise Type	Description
Jan. 2018	**Orientation**	Brief personnel on mission's mass casualty plan.
Mar. 2018	**Workshop**	Conduct a scenario-based discussion to develop procedures for expanding mass casualty capacities.
Aug. 2018	**Drill**	Conduct a drill to practice applying tourniquets and utilizing Individual First Aid Kits.
Oct. 2018	**Tabletop**	Evaluate the CMT procedures for managing the response to an attack on the mission offices.
Dec. 2018	**Game**	Conducting role playing game to practice de-escalation techniques.
Feb. 2019	**Seminar**	Conduct training on command and control for CMT personnel.
Mar. 2019	**Drill**	Test radio systems for mission response personnel, and establish communications with sector offices and UNOCC via video-teleconference.
Jun. 2019	**Functional**	Activate command centre and test the CMT's management of a simulated attack on the mission's offices.
Nov. 2019	**Full Scale**	Deploy actors to simulate terrorists and casualties, and evaluate the field response to an attack on the offices.

Exercise Staffing by Subtype

Staffing will depend upon how large your SIMEX is, but the following is a list of exercise roles and responsibilities.

Role	Description	Orientation	Workshop	TTX	Game	Drill	FX	FSX
Participant / Player	Personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing the tasks to be evaluated during the SIMEX.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Exercise Director	Person designated as the primary coordinator for all SIMEX activities, usually serves as the lead planner on the Exercise Design Team.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facilitator	Member of the SIMEX team who prompts discussions during Discussion-Based Exercises. More than one may be needed depending on the size of the SIMEX.	X	X	X	X			
Controller	Member of the SIMEX team who plan and manage exercise play in Operations-Based Exercises. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data and information, and may prompt player action with injects. More than one Controller may be needed.					X	X	X
Simulators	Control staff who role play nonparticipating organizations or individuals in the Simulation Cell (SimCell). Aid in the delivery of injects and provide additional information to Players as they request it.			**Maybe**			X	X
Actors / Role Players	Actors assume the roles of specific people in face-to-face interactions during a SIMEX; such as victims, bystanders, or media.				X		**Maybe**	X
Evaluators	Exercise personnel who evaluate designated tasks for capabilities during the SIMEX. Typically, at least one Evaluator is needed per capability being Evaluator, more may be necessary.			X	X	X	X	X
Support Staff	Exercise personnel who perform administrative or logistical functions as needed, including **Note-takers.**	**As needed**						
Observers	Outside personnel who observe a portion of the SIMEX but do not participate in evaluated play. Their inclusion is entirely up to the Exercise Planning Team.	**As deemed appropriate by Exercise Planning Team**						

Guidelines for Making the Scenario More Realistic for Players[4]

Tip 1. Proper Sequence of Events. Take some time during the design of the exercise to walk through the scenario and the exercise in order to make sure the scenario follows a logical and realistic timeframe. If events happen too fast or out of sequence, it can mean that Players become less involved in the exercise and can lose interest. Therefore, a **Master Scenario Events List Synchronisation Meeting** is critical for more complex Operations-Based Exercises.

Tip 2. Acknowledge Artificialities in Advance. Sometimes you have to play with timelines in order make sure you can address the Objectives of the exercise adequately. You may need to make certain decisions for the Players before the start of the exercise in order to make sure it keeps on track. If you are imposing any of these artificialities on Players, notify them in advance.

Tip 3. Combat "This Couldn't Happen Here". Often, SIMEX Players try to find a reason to not believe the scenario. This could be the result of an overly analytical mind wanting to perform well, it could also be a participant fearful of their potential performance. Whatever the reason, you must take steps to ensure the scenario is plausible and fight their urge to say, "this couldn't happen here" or "it wouldn't happen like that." Some helpful ways to do that are:

1. Use historical events in the mission as the basis for the scenario. Rather than just replay a previous incident, embellish or alter it, but no one can argue it cannot happen here when it already has.
2. Use current trends in the political sphere or rebel/terrorist attacks that are occurring in other missions. If adversaries are using a new technique to attack friendly forces, civilians or UN staff, it may only be a matter of time before that technique appears in your country.
3. Use similar scenarios as listed in the Security Risk Management process; these respond to specifically identified threats and have been endorsed by the Security Management Team.
4. Remind Players **do not 'fight (or argue with) the scenario**. Remind them this is not an exercise in how well you can create a problem, but how well the mission's plans and procedures can respond to the problem that is presented.

Tip 4. Noise. Consider creating "noise" injects, or smaller injects that have little relevance to the objectives but would realistically occur during a crisis if you want to add additional friction to the exercise. Be careful to ensure these 'noise' injects do not lead the Players too far away from the main objectives. "Noise" could be requests from T/PCC for updates on their units, or inquiries from member states on minor aspects of the overall

[4] Tips are based on recommendations from the *Handbook on Simulation Exercises for EU Public Health Settings.*

crisis. These typically are intended to draw attention *slightly* away from the scenario, similar to how real-world events might.

Tip 5. Details. Sometimes the smallest, seemingly insignificant details (such as a street address or old name for a government agency) can undermine the credibility of the scenario. It is recommended to have someone with extensive local knowledge who will not be a Player in the exercise to review your scenario for these potential details.

Tip 6. Announced vs. Unannounced Exercises. Announced exercises have the benefit of allowing participants to review their plans and procedures and come to the exercise with more confidence. It also reduces the anxiety in the individual that she/he is being personally evaluated in such a way as it reflects on job performance ratings. However, there is danger in participants being *too* prepared for an exercise. They may artificially perform actions perfectly because they know that they are being evaluated but then perform actions completely differently in a real crisis. Consider implementing occasional unannounced exercises as part of your mission Exercise Plan in order to gain surprise.

Tip 7. Elements to Avoid in the Scenario. There is no such thing as a perfect scenario. The scenario is just a tool to drive discussions and actions. But there are a few pitfalls to avoid when creating a scenario:

- **Excessively detailed scenario** can divert attention away from your objectives. Make sure that the information from your scenario keeps their attention focused on your objectives.
- **Overly complex scenarios** risk overwhelming or losing the attention of Players as they mentally tune out thinking "this will never happen." Your goal is to *challenge* not *overwhelm* the participants. Though a real crisis may completely overwhelm participants, you do not learn anything useful or identify substantive changes if your Players are so overwhelmed they shut down. Avoid the temptation, for example, to put an earthquake into your scenario at the same time your Players are facing widespread electoral violence.
- **"All Inclusive Scenarios"** similar to excessively detailed scenarios, try not to present the Players with too much information. Limit your objectives in the planning stages, and base your scenario around only those objectives.
- **Sensitive scenarios** may divert people's attention away from the objectives, and cause challenges for the Exercise Planners and the mission. For example, using real political figures or current events may prove sensitive for the mission. Consult with Senior Leadership before using real names, places and current events.
- **Scenarios that depend too heavily on Player Actions** require certain actions or statements by Players in order to advance to the next major event. These require extensive planning and can be difficult to pull off successfully. Avoid making your scenario or exercise flow too dependent on Player actions, rather make Player actions dependent upon the Major Events you provide to them

Annex B: Exercise Planning Meetings

Explanation of Recommended Meetings

Meeting	Purpose	Agenda	Outcomes
Stakeholder Engagement Meeting	This meeting starts the planning process for the SIMEX. Works best when key stakeholders from SRSG, mission, UNHQ, UNCT, AFP, Host Government, etc. are engaged to obtain priorities and recommendations for objectives. ***Not necessary for simpler exercises but still recommended.***	➢ Scope of Simulation ➢ Proposed Objectives ➢ Proposed Location, date, duration ➢ Proposed participating agencies and location ➢ Identify Exercise Planning Team ➢ SIMEX concept ➢ Identify any political or other concerns ➢ Determine resources that might be needed to plan SIMEX ➢ Establish Planning Timelines	➢ Agreement on SIMEX concept, scope, objectives, and capabilities to examine. ➢ Consensus on the proposed timeline for planning ➢ Anticipated extent to which Players will be expected to participate. ➢ Identification of Exercise Planning Team personnel. ➢ Establish milestones and next planning meeting.
Initial Planning Meeting	Formal beginning of the planning for Exercise Planning Team members. Purpose is to finalize the scope and objectives, identify design requirements and conditions (including any artificialities that need to be included), formalize objectives, and identify scenario variables (i.e. time, location, extent, threat).	➢ Review and approve Scope ➢ Review and approve Essential Capabilities and Objectives ➢ Refine exercise concept, including duration. ➢ Identify evaluation requirements, including critical tasks to be evaluated. ➢ Identify plans, policies, and procedures to be tested ➢ Identify scenario and scenario variables ➢ Discuss any simulation needs (i.e. pyrotechnics, simulated media, etc.) ➢ Formalize list of participants and their expected involvement.	➢ Clearly defined Essential Capabilities and aligned Objectives. ➢ Critical tasks or discussions to be evaluated. ➢ Identify scenario variables (i.e. threat, scope, location, conditions) ➢ Refined list of participating entities or organizations. ➢ Begin drafting SIMEX documents ➢ Refined exercise planning timeline and milestones ➢ Identification of any subject matter experts who may be needed ➢ A list of tasks to be accomplished before the next meeting.

		➢ Identify Supporting Documents that may be needed. ➢ Set date, time, and location for next meeting.	
Midterm Planning Meeting	Serves as the halfway point between the start of planning and the conduct of the SIMEX. Allows for finalization of critical logistics, scheduling, and administrative items. ***Midterm Planning Meeting may not be necessary for smaller Discussion-Based Exercises, though it is never a bad idea to convene one.***	➢ Comments of draft documents ➢ Construction of scenario, including major events ➢ Identification of exercise venue artificialities and/or limitations. ➢ Agreement on final logistical items ➢ Identify any outstanding items	➢ Fully reviewed Exercise Documents with comments for revision ➢ Fully reviewed scenario timeline. ➢ Well-developed major events and supportive injects. ➢ Confirmation of exercise venue. ➢ Schedule date and time for next meeting.
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Synchronization Meeting	For complex Tabletop Exercises or Operations-Based Exercises with a complicated scenario it is important to conduct a MSEL Synchronization Meeting. In this meeting, the Exercise Planning Team reads through each of the injects to ensure the messages do not conflict or provide erroneous information that could unintentionally throw off the Players.	➢ Reading through each inject to identify: 1. Will it stimulate the actions to be evaluated? 2. Is it being delivered in the manner it would be in real life? 3. What actions should the Player be taking in response to it? 4. Will additional injects be required in case the Players do not respond as expected?	➢ Finalization of the Master Scenario Events List, all injects are written appropriately and are expected to stimulate observable actions. ➢ Simulation aids (i.e. emails, maps, videos, etc.) are identified and created.
Final Planning Meeting	This meeting allows planners to finalize all outstanding items, including documents and logistical items. ***All SIMEXs should have a Final Planning Meeting.***	➢ Comprehensive review of all exercise documents. ➢ Resolve any outstanding planning issues. ➢ Finalize roles for Exercise Planning Team as Controllers, Facilitators, Simulators, or Evaluators	➢ Exercise documents and materials are finalized and approved. ➢ Exercise Planning Team understand their assignments. ➢ Logistical elements are confirmed.

In-Progress Reviews	When conducting a complicated simulation, it may be helpful to schedule informal meetings or teleconferences to discuss the progress of key tasks and planning items.	➢ Developed as needed	➢ Assigned as needed

Developing a Mission Exercise Plan

Projecting out the mission's exercise and training needs for a two to three-year period helps to provide strategic goals for improvement, as well as a well-planned but flexible roadmap for improving capabilities. It also allows for better alignment with initiatives and requirements set forth by UNHQ, DPET, or other partners. A long-term projection allows external participants who may be required/desired for inclusion in the simulation exercises, such as UNOCC or the Host Country authorities, to adjust their schedules to allow for participation. Finally, by aligning with the requirements of other stakeholders, it allows the mission to avoid "exercise fatigue" which sets in when participants are required to exercise too often, leading to reduced desire to perform and subpar results.

Mission Exercise Plan Workshop

A Good Practice is to develop a Mission Exercise Plan (MEP)that projects the needs for a two or three-year period. This is considered a "good practice" rather than a required step because it is understood and appreciated that due to the unstable nature of the environments in which the missions operate, it may be difficult to plan this far in advance. However, consideration should be given at the mission to projecting out simulation exercise needs are far in advance as feasible, with the understanding that this is a living document, and that projects and needs are subject to change. The Mission Exercise Plan (MEP) is not a binding document, but more of a roadmap towards improving capabilities within the mission.

Though the MEP is written for a two to three-year cycle, another Good Practice is to host an annual MEP Workshop to review the document and the current threats and hazards facing the mission, as each mission often faces rapidly changing conditions and priorities.

The MEP Workshop should include relevant stakeholders who may be called upon to participate in mission simulation exercises, or who may provide support to the development and conduct of these simulation exercises. Examples of stakeholders to invite to the workshop could include:

- SRSG and CMT members
- UNDSS
- Area Security Coordinators
- UNCT
- UN Agencies, Funds & Programmes
- Host Country Authorities
- Nongovernmental Organisations
- Independent electoral commissions
- Embassies or Consulates of Member States in the country

These are only examples of organisations to consider, it will be up the mission to determine who is appropriate to invite.

Suggested Content for Mission Exercise Plan

Mission Priorities In this section, describe the priorities the mission has determined for improvement or validation through simulation exercises over the next two or three years. This can be the result of the discussions from the Mission Exercise Plan Workshop or directive from UNHQ or Mission Leadership, incorporating the current threats and hazards as well as the continuous improvement actions from previous simulations or real-world crises.
Essential Capabilities for Improvement Provide information on which capabilities have been prioritised for improvement, with an emphasis on what specific Critical Tasks, or major activities with the Capability, will be focused on during this two to three-year period. Include a brief description of any simulations the mission anticipates conducting to address the capability. It may also be useful to also list any training courses the mission anticipates conducting or participating in related to the capability to further demonstrate improvement activities.
Multi-Year Projection Using a format such as the sample below, project out for a two to three-year period the exercise strategy for the mission. This should include any scheduled or anticipated simulations. It is divided into quarters of a calendar year, as exact dates of simulations are often difficult to schedule that far in advance. **Remember this is a goal to work towards, not a binding agreement.**

Sample Multi-Year Exercise Projection

Year	First Quarter Jan - Mar	Second Quarter Apr -Jun	Third Quarter Jul - Sep	Fourth Quarter Oct - Dec
[2018]	Crisis Management Team Orientation (January)	Business Continuity Communications Drill (Apr)	Casualty Evacuation TTX (Jul)	Mass Casualty Full Scale Exercise (Nov)
[2019]		Pre-Election Crisis TTX (May)	Pre-Election Crisis Functional Exercise (with UNOCC) (Aug)	
[2020]	Natural Disaster Response TTX (with Host Country) (Mar)			

Annex C. Best Practices for Workshops and TTXs

Discussion-Based Exercises can provide a cost-effective way to evaluate capabilities, plans, and procedures. However, they inherently lack realism because participants are essentially seated around a table responding to words on paper instead of real or simulated events. This Annex will provide some best practices that can help to enhance your Discussion-Based Exercise.

Remember the Limitations of a Discussion-Based Exercise

Discussion-Based Exercises are so named because participants are only expected to *discuss* their responses to your simulated crisis. Therefore, it may be unrealistic for them to actually perform certain tasks or produce certain documents. Instead, encourage the participants to talk their way through *how* they would perform and any challenges they anticipate with completing those tasks.

Participants should have the opportunity to talk through problem solving and decision-making, referencing existing plans and procedures. If this is an announced exercise, it may be beneficial to let the Players know in advance what plans, procedures, or policies are being tested so they can review them or bring copies with them to the SIMEX.

Activities are simulated in a Discussion-Based Exercise, so no real resources will be deployed. Also, time is *irrelevant* in a Discussion-Based Exercise to some degree. The Facilitator can feel free to pause time in the scenario or jump backwards in time if discussions will benefit from.

Useful Materials

The following materials are useful when conducting a Discussion-Based Exercise.

- **Situation Manual**. This document provides the participants with whatever information related to the scenario or the discussions you would like them to know. This can include an expanded, in-depth scenario; objectives; maps; policies; and the discussion questions themselves.
- **Multi-Media Presentation.** It is often helpful to use briefing slides to introduce Players to the SIMEX. This briefing should include the Objectives and any artificialities or 'ground rules' you want to implement for the discussions. This is also a good way to present the scenario to the Players in a condensed version to begin the discussions. Consider enhancing the realism of the scenario by using mission-specific crisis briefing templates, pictures, or videos. By the end of the briefing you want your participants to believe the story you are telling them.
- **Maps.** Maps of the locations referenced in your crisis scenario are always helpful, especially if you want Players to discuss tactical-level decisions, such as where to move resources or where to establish medical aid stations.

- **Exercise Evaluation Guides.** Your evaluators should have copies of the EEGs to assist with recording their observations and evaluations. Players should not have access to the EEGs.
- **Participant Feedback Form.** Each participant should be provided with a feedback form that allows them to share their experiences with the SIMEX. This should capture any recommendations for you to implement to improve the design and delivery of your future SIMEXs.

SIMEX Support Staff

An effective SIMEX should include the following support staff.

- **Facilitator**. The Facilitator is responsible for guiding discussions and encouraging participants to interact with each other to make decisions, achieve consensus, or problem solve. If using breakout groups, each breakout group should have a Facilitator assigned to. All Facilitators should be part of the Exercise Planning Team and included in planning meetings whenever possible.
- **Evaluator**. Each exercise needs an Evaluator. Evaluators should focus on listening to the discussions being had, and extrapolating from those discussions challenges, strengths, and lessons learned. Evaluators should not be involved in facilitating discussions in order to ensure they are able to focus on recording discussions.
- **Note-taker.** If you have a large audience, you may find it useful to have a note-taker, or more than one, to take notes on the conversations that are being had. By recording the conversations more in depth, the Evaluators might be able to review after and find items they may have missed.

Logistical Considerations

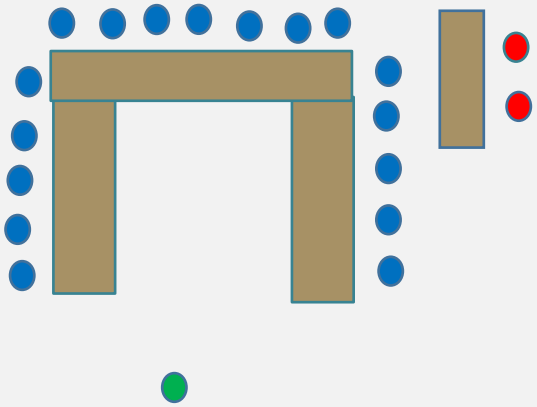
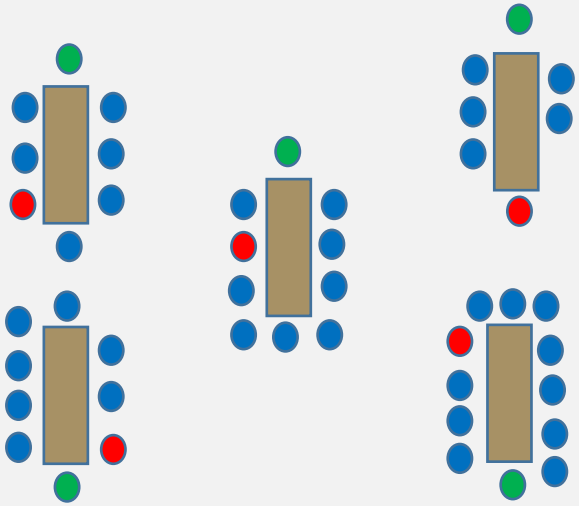
- **Room Set-up**. Consider the size of the audience you are evaluating, the available space, and the discussions you would like them to have in order to best determine how to set up the room.
    - **"U" Shape** – Commonly, TTX are set up in a "U" or "Horseshoe" style, with participants in a semi-circle oriented towards a central screen and lead Facilitator. For operational or strategic exercises, use the familiar layout of the CMT or OCB's usual meeting rooms.
    - **Breakout Style** – To facilitate larger numbers of participants, it may be better to break them up into smaller tables or separate rooms. This increases the discussions but will also increase the support requirements for running it.
- **Audio-Visual (AV) Equipment.** If using a multi-media presentation, consider the audio-visual equipment you will need to run it. This could include a laptop, projector, or speakers. Also, consider the need for microphones, or video-teleconferencing with remote sites. If using breakout style rooms, you may need additional AV equipment.

- **Reproduction of Materials.** You may want to print copies of everything, so the participants have Situation Manuals. A cheaper alternative might be to send participants electronic copies of the Manuals. Consider though that you lose control of where these documents go if you send out electronic copies; so if your scenario contains politically sensitive information that may be misconstrued by entities outside of the mission, you may want to think about printing a controlled number of copies and collecting them after.

Sample Injects for a Discussion-Based Exercise

Inject	Essential Capability	Questions
Inject 1. The Incident Commander on the ground at the crash site is requesting 3 medical evacuation helicopters equipped for night-time operations. With dusk quickly approaching, he is concerned they will not be able to evacuate the critical injured. Also, he would like to know where the wounded are to be transported to?	Leadership Mass Casualty Management Resource Contingency Planning	1. Based on real world availability, does the mission have the resources to fill this request? If not, how would the CMT respond to this? 2. According to current plans, where would mass casualties from an off-site crash be transported to for treatment? 3. What long-term logistical considerations do you anticipate as the response will go into night time operations?
Inject 2. The Host Country is infuriated that someone within the mission is reporting mechanical issues among the mission's aviation assets has been a well-known and on-going problem. They are demanding a full investigation and want the UN held accountable for the loss of their Minister of Justice.	Leadership Strategic Communications Resource Contingency Planning	1. What is the mission's response to these allegations? 2. How should the mission handle the possibility of maintenance issues with the aviation assets? What impact would that have on operations?
Inject 3. Troop Contributing Countries have heard about the crash and are demanding to know which countries those injured or killed are from.	Strategic Communications Human Resource Services	1. What is the process for notifying TCC/PCC about identities of casualties? 2. How would families of casualties be notified? How does this process differ if the casualties are military, police, or civilians employees?

Examples of Room Set Up Options

Style	Diagram	Benefits	Limitations
U Style		• All participants receive the same information. • All participants can participate in the discussions. • Only one Facilitator required. • Fewer Evaluators required • Fewer logistics support required.	• Only one person can talk at a time. • Some participants might engage in side-discussions. • All participant may not be able to engage in discussions. • Limited in the amount of topics you can discuss. • Limited number of participants.
Breakout Style		• Smaller groups can improve collaboration. • Easier to encourage individuals to participate in discussions. • Breakout groups could be created around certain response entities (i.e. CMT, SMT, or Incident Command Post)/ • Breakout groups allow for more topics to be discussed by focusing groups on specific capabilities or problems. • Limited size of groups reduces side-discussions.	• Can be very noisy if run in the same room. • Increased space requirements if you want to use separate rooms. • Separate rooms may require additional audio-visual support. • Separate rooms increase the chance decisions are made without consulting other decision-makers. • Additional Facilitators and Evaluators are needed for each breakout group. • Consider a plenary brief-back session, and encourage collaboration between groups.

Facilitator Tips

Do	Do Not
Prepare in advance. Make sure you have all materials and test laptop and AV equipment before the SIMEX. Facilitate, encourage discussion, do not dominate it. You should be talking 25% and listening 75% of the time. Encourage participants to talk to each other, not directly back to you. It may also be helpful, when possible, to have participants run the exercise as if they are running a CMT meeting. This will encourage them to work together, and you as the Facilitator provide discussion questions as needed to keep the conversation going. Make eye contact and modulate your voice in a conversational manner in order to stimulate attentive listening. Have more questions than you think you need. This will help fill time if all the questions are answered quicker than expected. But prioritize your questions to ensure you know which topics are most important to get to. Use open-ending questions. By asking simple yes or no questions you do not identify causes of critical questions. Utilize the **"Parking Lot"** Technique to resolve disputes.	Provide the answers for the participants. Allow time to discuss through problems as time allows. Allow one person to dominate the discussion. If one or only a few people monopolize the conversation, the other participants will be discouraged from speaking. Use inappropriate humour or language. Jokes can be fun and break up the potential monotony of the discussions; but consider how your jokes could be inappropriate or misinterpreted by the audience. Dismiss or demean opinions that you don't feel are correct. Your job is to encourage discussion, not to judge it at this point. Cut people off too quick. Some people require a little extra time to work through their thoughts to get to their point, especially if they are have not prepared in advance. So allow people a little time to talk their way through their answers before trying to hurry them up.

Parking Lot Discussions. Discussion-Based Exercise can often lead to debates. Often these debates are extremely beneficial to uncovering areas for improvement. Other things it may seem like the participants are continuing to argue the same points without resolving them. A good practice in this case is to have a board or notepad labelled "Parking Lot" visible to all attendees. When the participants debate an issue that appears to you that they will not be able to resolve or reach a consensus in the setting of this

SIMEX, notify the participants that you will be adding that topic to the "Parking Lot" – meaning the issue has been noted and they can return to the issue after the SIMEX when they will have more time to address it properly. Be sure to include these Parking Lot issues in your AAR.

Annex D. Best Practices for Functional Exercises

Functional Exercises often take the most planning as you are writing a scenario and injects that are intended to be very realistic. You have to make the participants believe that outside of the walls of their command centre something really bad is *really* happening. You want to motivate Players to act as if this was an actual crisis, following procedures and seeking out more information in order to make decisions as if this was real life. Therefore, you need to be able to respond to inquiries or actions to make sure Players stay on task and move towards achieving the objectives. If done properly, these can actually some of the most beneficial, *and fun*, exercises you do.

Level of Focus During Functional Exercises

It is important to remember that the focus of functional exercises often bridges the gap between Strategic, Operational, and Tactical activities. The goal is to create an environment where participants have to actually perform the tasks or functions they are discussing as much as is feasible. Operations-Based Exercises, such as functional exercises, allow Players to demonstrate what they *will* do in a crisis thereby providing evaluators with better opportunity to validate training and plans.

Identify Who is Playing and Who is Not

When creating the Functional SIMEX you'll have to identify what people or agencies will be participating. If agencies are not participating (such as the Host Government National Police) but would be involved in responding to the crisis, you will need to simulate their involvement through the use of a Simulation Cell (SimCell).

Establishing and Managing a SimCell

The SimCell is responsible for simulating any person or agency whom the Players would normally have to interact with in a crisis BUT who will not be participating in the exercise. This enhances the realism by ensuring Players continue to walk through the motions of contacting these agencies. The SimCell should be separate from the actual Players, and staffed with Simulators, or role Players who understand the roles they will be simulating in order to provide validate responses to Player inquiries.

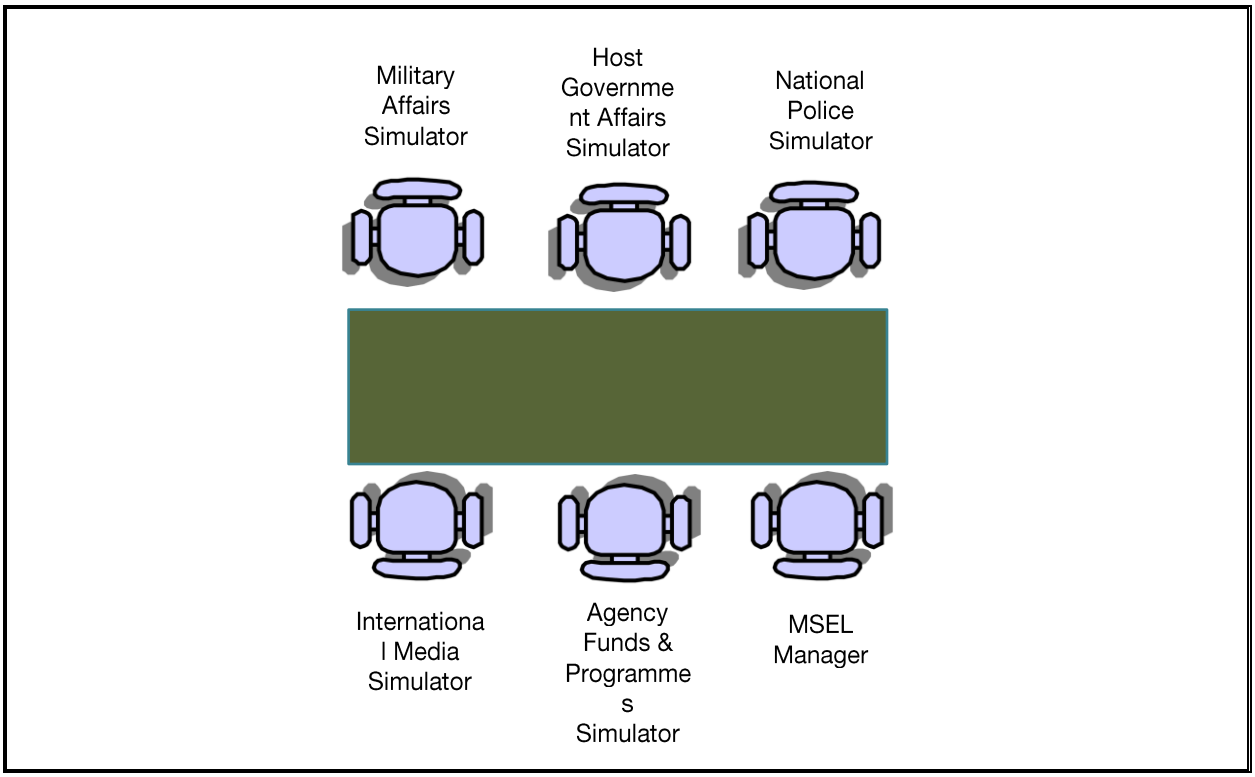
Supplies that would benefit the SimCell greatly include:

- **Communications**. The SimCell should have telephones, radios, internet, or other methods of communicating that you have planned to use during the exercise. They should be able to deliver exercise injects according to the Master Scenario

Events List (MSEL), as well as communicate with Players who require additional information. Having designated phone lines or generic email addresses may help to streamline communications between Players and the SimCell.

- **MSEL Tracking System.** It is important to develop a simplified method of tracking which injects have been delivered from the MSEL, and if the Players have performed the desired Expected Action. Sometimes Players may require a little more prodding to complete a task, so it is important to keep track of any responses.
- **MSEL Manager.** If using a group to run the SimCell it is helpful to designate someone to be the MSEL Manager, who will track which injects have been delivered and responded to. This person could also be responsible for making up ad hoc injects to help respond to issues that arise or to provide further stimulation to lead Players towards completing the objectives.
- **List of Roles to Play**. Ensure that the SimCell know what roles or personalities they will be assuming.

Sample Layout of a SimCell



Developing the Scenario

Remember the scenario and injects need to mirror reality. You should anticipate that, if you have done your job correctly and Players are engaged in the simulation, the Players

will likely ask for additional items of information. One good practice for anticipating this, if time permits in your planning, is to write a **Ground Truth** document. The Ground Truth document is the full scenario written out as if it was a novel. This document provides a source for the SimCell to make up responses to Player questions without risking providing erroneous information.

You may find that despite extensive planning and writing of injects that players do not always respond the way you want them to. Also, some players or agencies may not be as included in the exercise as you had intended. During these times you may need to create **ad hoc injects**, or make them up as you go in order to try to provide additional stimulation for Players to undertake the actions you need to evaluate. Before the SimCell makes up these injects though, they should check with the MSEL Manager or Exercise Director to ensure the ad hoc inject is ok ad does not conflict with other information written for the exercise.

Useful Material

- **Exercise Plan.** This document provides Players with any information they need to know about the scenario or how to communicate during the exercise (especially in the event you need to use alternate telephone numbers, email addresses, or radio frequencies in order to avoid impacting real world operations).
- **Controller/Evaluator Handbook**. The Controller / Evaluator Handbook provides the Exercise Planning Team with all the necessary information to run the exercise. This includes the objectives, full scenario, Master Scenario Events List, telephone or communications plan, and Exercise Evaluation Guides.
- **Ground Truth Document**. Though not required, this provides helpful scenario details for the SimCell to enhance the realism of the SIMEX.
- **Master Scenario Events List**. The Controllers and SimCell need to have copies of the injects in order to know when they are to be delivered and how.

SIMEX Support Staffing

- **Exercise Director.** This is the person who is in charge of running the SIMEX.
- **Controller.** The Controllers support the SIMEX by monitoring the progress of the Players to determine if the Players are staying on track, that they are all engaged, and if any Player of agency is being underutilized. They can deliver injects depending on how the Exercise Planners develop the SIMEX.
- **Evaluator.** Evaluators should focused on listening to the discussions being had, and extrapolating from those discussions challenges, strengths, and lessons learned. Evaluators should not be involved in facilitating discussions in order to ensure they are able to focus on recording discussions.
- **Simulator.** These personnel staff the SimCell to act out the roles of any agencies or persons who are not participating in the SIMEX but whom would likely be

needed during a real crisis. They can deliver injects depending on how the Exercise Planners develop the SIMEX. These simulators help to enhance the reality of the Functional Exercise.

Controller / Evaluator Training

Controllers and Evaluators should be part of the planning meetings whenever possible. However, frequently they will be identified just prior to the SIMEX. It is important to make sure to provide a briefing to the Controllers and Evaluators prior to the SIMEX (usually the day before) to ensure everyone understands:

1. Objectives
2. Assigned roles
3. Major actions and principles being evaluated
4. Exercise timelines
5. Communications for the SIMEX
6. Reporting procedures if someone gets hurt

Sample Injects and Master Scenario Events List for Operations Based Exercise

Inject #	Time	To	From	Method	Summary	Message	Expected Actions
01	1000	DSS Radio Room	SRSG Convoy	Radio	Attack on SRSG Convoy	"EXERCISE. This is [Insert Convoy Call Sign]! We are under attack at the intersection of [Insert Intersection]. Someone detonated a VBIED and now we are receiving heavy gunfire. The SRSG's car in disabled and on fire, we can't confirm if he is inside at the time. We need help immediately!"	1. Convene the CMT and CMT-WG 2. Initiate the Lines of Succession outlined in the Crisis Management and Business Continuity Plans 3. Organize a rescue operation for the SRSG and his convoy.
02	1010	DSS Radio Room	SRSG Convoy	Radio	Update on SRSG Convoy	"EXERCISE. This is [Insert Convoy Call Sign]. We have 7 casualties and 3 confirmed fatalities. We can't locate the SRSG among the vehicles and we are taking fire from all directions! When can we expect our rescue?"	1. Identify alternate methods for contacting the SRSG. 2. Provide ETA for rescue team. 3. Notify Medical to prepare for multiple casualties. 03
03	1015	DSS Radio Room	SRSG Convoy	Radio	Update on SRSG	"EXERCISE. The SRSG has made contact. He and a protective detail have made it safely to the Presidential Compound. One protective officer is critically injured and they need immediate evacuation."	1. Prepare medical to receive the casualties. 2. Inform convoy that the SRSG is safe at Presidential Palace. 3. Organize second rescue operation for Presidential Palace.
04	1020	SIOC	Host Country Intelligence Service	Telephone	Social Media Threats	"EXERCISE. Your counterparts at the Host Country Intelligence Service are reporting that the terrorist group [Insert Name] is posting on their social media pages claiming responsibility for the attack. They are claiming the UN protective detail was indiscriminately firing on civilians, killing children."	1. Provide update to CMT. 2. CMT to coordinate messaging with DPI to address the claims.

Annex E. Best Practices for Full Scale Exercises

Full Scale Exercises provide an excellent opportunity to validate procedures, communication, and interagency coordination as Evaluators can actually witness these activities in practice. Full Scale Exercise also have the added bonus of being fun for the participants thereby increasing engagement and participation in crisis management preparation at the mission. They do often require additional funding, and the chance of people getting injured can be increased. Exercising at the full scale exercise level in a Peacekeeping Mission environment may not always be practical due to mission activities, availability of resources, or even the potential for public misinterpretation of full scale military manoeuvres. Full scale exercises in this setting may include pre-deployment operational readiness exercises, or very focused exercise topics such as security response at the mission offices or casualty evacuation.

Level of Focus During Full Scale Exercises

It is important to remember that the focus of Full Scale Exercises are almost exclusively tactical activities. The goal is to create an environment where participants have to actually perform the tasks or functions they are discussion as much as is feasible. Operations-Based Exercises such as these allow Players to demonstrate what they *will* do in a crisis thereby providing Evaluators with better opportunity to validate training and plans.

Field Evolution Developments

Utilize subject matter experts to create interactive and realistic “hands-on” conditions that challenge the participants and require them to operate as they would in real conditions. Throughout each step though, you must be evaluating the evolution to identify any potential safety concerns for participants of the exercise.

Role Players

Adding role Players to the Full-Scale Exercise adds another layer of realism for participants. Role Players can assume the identities of extremists or non-state actors, casualties, bystanders, government officials, media personalities, other UN officials… the possibilities are only limited by your imagination. They can be used to test field management of injuries, security procedures, crowd control measures, or crisis communications. If you use Role Players, it is helpful to provide a briefing to the Role Players before the SIMEX to define what their roles should be and how far they are allowed to go in their acting (you don’t want them to overact or stray too far from the scenario).

Safety Procedures

Evaluate what field evolutions you will be exercising and what the potential is for someone to get hurt. Any efforts should be made to reduce or eliminate those hazards without ruining the integrity of the SIMEX. This could be providing masks during the use of simulated ammunition, having fire extinguishers present near pyrotechnics, or having an ambulance on standby.

You will also need to develop procedures for differentiating a real-world emergency from a complication you are injecting into the scenario. This can be done by announcing a special word, such as "**No Duff**" or plainly stating "**Real World Emergency**". Whichever you determine you will use, you **must** tell all Controllers, Evaluators, Simulators, Role Players **and** Players to ensure everyone understands the system.

Finally, clearly identify what all Players, Controllers, Evaluators, Simulators, or Role Players should do if there is a real emergency. Such procedures typically include:

1. Announce "No Duff" to nearest Controller or Evaluator and explain the situation.
2. Exercise Controller or Evaluator calls an immediate stop to the exercise until the incident can be investigated.
3. Exercise Controller or Evaluator determines if the real emergency is serious enough to stop the remainder of the exercise or summon an ambulance if needed.
4. Exercise Director and Controllers will identify if or when the exercise can resume.

Useful Material

- **Exercise Plan.** This document provides Players with any information they need to know about the scenario or how to communicate during the exercise (especially in the event you need to use alternate telephone numbers, email addresses, or radio frequencies in order to avoid impacting real world operations).
- **Controller/Evaluator Handbook**. The Controller / Evaluator Handbook provides the Exercise Planning Team with all the necessary information to run the exercise. This includes the objectives, full scenario, Master Scenario Events List, telephone or communications plan, and Exercise Evaluation Guides.
- **Ground Truth Document**. Though not required, this provides helpful scenario details for the SimCell to enhance the realism of the SIMEX.
- **Master Scenario Events List**. The Controllers and SimCell need to have copies of the injects in order to know when they are to be delivered and how.

SIMEX Support Staffing

- **Exercise Director.** This is the person who is in charge of running the SIMEX.
- **Controller.** The Controllers support the SIMEX by monitoring the progress of the Players to determine if the Players are staying on track, that they are all engaged, and if any Player of agency is being underutilized. They can deliver injects depending on how the Exercise Planners develop the SIMEX.
- **Evaluator.** Evaluators should focused on listening to the discussions being had, and extrapolating from those discussions challenges, strengths, and lessons learned. Evaluators should not be involved in facilitating discussions in order to ensure they are able to focus on recording discussions. For smaller exercises, the Controller and Evaluator roles could be combined.
- **Simulator.** These personnel staff the SimCell to act out the roles of any agencies or persons who are not participating in the SIMEX but whom would likely be needed during a real crisis. They can deliver injects depending on how the Exercise Planners develop the SIMEX. These simulators help to enhance the reality of the Functional Exercise.
- **Role Player.** These personnel interact directly with the Players assuming the roles of terrorists, casualties, bystanders, government officials, media, etc.
- **Safety Officer.** Depending on the evolutions conducted or weather conditions you will be operating in, it may be beneficial to have a designated Safety Officer to monitor safety issues.

Controller / Evaluator Training

Controllers and Evaluators should be part of the planning meetings whenever possible. However, frequently they will be identified just prior to the SIMEX. It is important to make sure to provide a briefing to the Controllers and Evaluators prior to the SIMEX (usually the day before) to ensure everyone understands:

1. Objectives
2. Assigned roles
3. Major actions being evaluated
4. Exercise timelines
5. Communications for the SIMEX
6. Reporting procedures if someone gets hurt

Annex F: Evaluating and Debriefing

Evaluating one's peers can be a challenging task; and evaluating one's superiors can be absolutely intimidating. This Annex will provide some good practices on planning and conducting the evaluation piece of the simulation, as well as debriefing participants and gathering feedback.

Identifying Evaluators

When identifying Evaluators to support the simulation, consider the following characteristics of a desirable Evaluator:

- Have a general knowledge of the capabilities, tasks, and processes being tested.
- Trusted, credible, and objective – to both Exercise Planning Team and participants.
- Without personal agenda and able to maintain objectivity during the evaluation.
- Committed and available to support planning meetings as well as the simulation.
- Able to gather, sort, and analyse required information:
    - What did they see?
    - What did they hear?
    - What was documented?
    - Identify root causes

Best Practice for Facilitator and Evaluator Selection

It is often extremely stressful to face a supervisor within the mission and evaluate him/her in a simulation. When selecting Facilitators or Evaluators, consider if the following are feasible:

- Ask for support from UNHQ
- Ask for a trusted and respected representative from the Host Country, or a nongovernmental organisation partner
- Ask a trusted and respected representative from a Member State Embassy or Consulate in the country
- Invite JOC, ORMS, or Crisis Management counterparts from a neighbouring mission if budgeting allows

Tips for Successful Evaluation

- The Facilitator should continuously attempt to place participants at ease by emphasizing the simulation is not evaluating them personally, and that identifying areas in need of improvement is a positive thing for the mission.
- Utilise an Exercise Evaluation Guide to provide consistent data collection.
- Use more than one Evaluator when possible.
- Evaluators should not be Players in the exercise, and should have no interaction with Players or participants to maintain objectivity.

- Establish a signal or method for the Evaluators to inform the Facilitator if discussions are providing enough material for a proper evaluation.
- Evaluators and Facilitators should meet during a pause in the simulation exercise to discuss the effectiveness of current facilitation questions for eliciting the desired discussions.
- Emphasize often that the *capabilities* or *procedures* are being evaluated and not the *individual*.
- Emphasize often that the simulation is a tool to improve the mission, and that it should not be viewed as something adversarial.
- Maintain objectivity, focusing evaluative comments on the Critical Tasks and not individual performance.
- Highlight strengths and best practices equally to the areas of improvement to avoid fixating only on the "negative".
- Avoid using the words "gaps" or "weaknesses" as this reinforces the negative connotations of a simulation as an indictment of personal performance. Rather, use the word "Area for Improvement" or "Opportunity for Improvement" as it will place a more positive tone to the overall experience.
- When writing the Evaluator's notes and the After Action Report, never refer to someone specifically when discussing areas in need of improvement. Rather, refer to the mission as a whole. Conversely, *do* consider mentioning someone by name or title if highlighting a best practice that was implemented or discussed during the simulation. This helps to build trust for future simulations.

Conducting a Participant Debriefing

Immediately following the simulation it is important to conduct a participant debriefing to gather additional insight for the After Action Report and Improvement Plan. The perspectives from the Players themselves can often help to highlight issues that the exercise was not able to address in depth, and may help clarify other points that were made during discussions. Inevitably, when asked for their thoughts on the exercise, Players will begin to dissect the exercise itself rather than the real issues the exercise raised. This will not assist in the identification of improvement recommendations for the mission. When conducting a Participant Debriefing, consider the following tips:

- Encourage each participant, starting with the SRSG or most senior Player, to identify what their top Strength was and at least one Area for Improvement.
- When the Player says "weakness", politely correct them to say "Area for Improvement" to maintain the positive atmosphere.
- It helps to display the objectives of the simulation during the debriefing and refer Players to this display so that their Strengths and Areas for Improvement align with the objectives as much as possible.
- Provide every participant with a Participant Feedback Form, and encourage them to reserve their critiques of the actual simulation (i.e. scenario, discussion questions, room set up, etc.) for this form so that the debriefing can focus on

what can improve future performance. The Feedback Form will also allow people who do not feel comfortable speaking up in front of peers or supervisors an opportunity to share their comments on Strengths and Areas for Improvement.

- Have the Evaluators provide two or three Strengths and Areas for Improvement they identified as well. Ensure that these are communicated in a professional, objective, and constructive manner.

Participant Feedback Form

Thank you for participating in this exercise. Your observations, comments, and input are greatly appreciated, and provide invaluable insight that will better prepare our nation against threats and hazards. Any comments provided will be treated in a sensitive manner and all personal information will remain confidential. Please keep comments concise, specific, and constructive.

Name: (OPTIONAL) _____

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Assessment Factor	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
Pre-exercise briefings were informative and provided the necessary information for my role in the exercise.	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic.	1	2	3	4	5
Exercise participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines.	1	2	3	4	5
Participants were actively involved in the exercise.	1	2	3	4	5
Exercise participation was appropriate for someone with my level of experience/training.	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise increased my understanding about and familiarity with the capabilities and resources of other participating organisations.	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise provided the opportunity to address significant decisions in support of crisis response.	1	2	3	4	5
After this exercise, I am better prepared to deal with the capabilities and hazards addressed.	1	2	3	4	5

1. **I observed the following strengths during this exercise:**

2. **I observed the following areas for improvement during this exercise:**

3. **Which exercise materials were most useful? Please identify any additional materials or resources that would be useful.**

4. **Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.**

Exercise Evaluation Guide

Exercise Name: [Insert exercise name] *Exercise Date:* [Insert exercise date]	*Mission:* [Insert Mission]	*Location:* [Insert venue name (mission headquarters, sector office, etc.]

Response

Exercise Objectives: [Insert exercise objectives]

Essential Capability 1: [Insert Essential Capability being tested]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Source(s): [Insert name of plan, policy, procedure, or reference]

Essential Capability 2: [Insert Essential Capability being tested]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Source(s): [Insert name of plan, policy, procedure, or reference]

Essential Capability 3: [Insert Essential Capability being tested]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Critical Task: [Insert task from plans or SOPs]
Source(s): [Insert name of plan, policy, procedure, or reference]

[Note: add additional boxes if more than three capabilities are being tested]

Essential Capability	Associated Critical Tasks	Observation Notes and Explanation of Rating	Target Rating
[Insert Essential Capability 1]	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
[Insert Essential Capability 2]	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
[Insert Essential Capability 3]	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		
	• [Insert associated Critical Task from page 1]		

Evaluator Name _____

Evaluator E-mail _____

Phone _____

[Note: Add more cells as needed to include all Critical Tasks from Page 1]

Ratings Key
P – Performed without Challenges
S – Performed with Some Challenges
M – Performed with Major Challenges
U – Unable to be Performed

Sample of Completed Exercise Evaluation Guide

Exercise Name: [Insert exercise name] *Exercise Date:* [Insert exercise date]	*Mission:* [Insert Mission]	*Location:* [Insert venue name (mission headquarters, sector office, etc.]
Response		
Exercise Objectives: **Objective 1.** Evaluate the capability of [Insert Mission] to establish and maintain Crisis Management structures, including strategic and operational coordination between Mission, Host Country, UNHQ, and militant factions in response to the breakdown in disarmament negotiations. **Objective 2.** Demonstrate effective crisis-related prioritisation and decision-making following the breakdown in disarmament negotiations.		
Essential Capability 1: Leadership *Critical Task:* SRSG and CMT establish leadership structure to evaluate and prioritise the needs of the crisis. *Critical Task:* CMT adjudicates strategic issues elevated to CMT from OCB *Critical Task:* CMT works with TCC to resolve issues with deployed field units. **Source(s):** Mission Crisis Management Handbook		
Essential Capability 2: Decision-Making *Critical Task:* CMT establishes priorities and objectives for the resolution of the current crisis. *Critical Task:* CMT is operational within 60 minutes of notification of this specific crisis. *Critical Task:* CMT reviews effectiveness of current crisis response activities and develops alternative strategies as needed. **Source(s):** Mission Crisis Management Handbook		

Essential Capability	Associated Critical Tasks	Observation Notes and Explanation of Rating	Target Rating
Leadership	• SRSG and CMT establish leadership structure to evaluate and prioritise the needs of the crisis.		
	• CMT adjudicates strategic issues elevated to CMT from OCB.		
	• CMT works with TCC to resolve issues with deployed field units.		
Decision-Making	• CMT establishes priorities and objectives for the resolution of the current crisis.		
	• CMT is operational within 60 minutes of notification of this specific crisis.		
	• CMT reviews effectiveness of current crisis response activities and develops alternative strategies as needed.		

Annex G: Improvement Planning

Simulation Exercises allow the mission to evaluate its overall capacity to meet Essential Capabilities and assess the effectiveness of plans, procedures, and training in a safe, low-stress environment. Mistakes or challenges in performance should not be viewed as a negative thing. Instead, they present an opportunity to make improvements to the overall system to make the mission more effective, efficient, and safe.

Exercises should not be viewed as one-time occurrences. They should be viewed as part of the commitment of the mission's leadership to continually improvement its performance. In order for that to occur, the SIMEX should be evaluated to identify *both* gaps and strengths, as well as recommended actions that can improve the gaps or sustain the strengths.

Establishing an Improvement Plan based on the observations and findings from a simulation exercise is also linked to the auditing process. Should a crisis occur at the field mission, any investigation or review after will likely seek to examine the steps the mission was taking to improve crucial capabilities. The After Action Report and Improvement Plans generated from simulation exercises can demonstrate a commitment on the part of the mission to identifying and improving those potential gaps.

Post-SIMEX Debriefing

Immediately following the SIMEX, the Exercise Planning Team needs to conduct a debriefing of the participants. A debriefing provides the participants with an opportunity to share their perspective on their performance, the policies and plans, and your exercise design. When feasible, each participant should be given an opportunity to voice his/her observations on the strengths and areas for improvement the participant noticed during the exercise. The Facilitator of the debriefing should encourage the participants to speak freely, and try to focus their attention and comments on the objectives of the SIMEX.

Inevitably, participants will drift towards critiquing the SIMEX itself. While this may be quite useful to you in improving future exercises, it likely will not assist directly with improving system performance. Therefore, one good practice is to provide the participants with a Feedback Form which will focus on the design, development, and conduct of the SIMEX, while the debriefing will then focus on what participants learned that can improve the policies, procedures, and system.

The After Action Report

The After Action Report (AAR) is the first step in Improvement Planning. In this report, the Exercise Planning Team elaborates on what they considered to be strengths and areas for improvement during the SIMEX. This should include:

1. Observation Statement. Explain what the strength or area for improvement was.
2. Explanation. Detailed explanation of why the Evaluator felt this was a strength or area for improvement.
3. Recommendations. If the Evaluator has a recommendation, or if the participants voiced a recommendation during the SIMEX debriefing, it should be included in the After Action Report.

Recommendations are most effective when they are specific, actionable, and can be aligned with the categories of:

- **Planning**. Possible improvements to existing or creation of new plans, policies, or procedures.
- **Organisation**. Recommended additions or improvements to organisational structures (i.e. development of new working groups, reassigning responsibilities to a different committee).
- **Equipment**. Suggested purchase of new equipment or maintenance of existing equipment (i.e. software upgrades, radio reprogramming, and monitor recalibration).
- **Training.** Identification of additional training on new topics or expansion of existing initiatives.
- **Exercise.** Identified recommendations for elements to include in future SIMEX.

The After Action Meeting

Once the AAR is completed in a draft format, the findings and recommendations need to be presented to the leadership of the mission. During this meeting, the leadership can provide their opinion on the validity of the observations, as well as voice support or concerns about each of the recommendations. Certain recommendations may need to be reworded or revised, others may be deemed to be not possible or not relevant at the mission level. A consensus on which recommendations are feasible and relevant should be reached during this meeting, providing the Exercise Team with the roadmap for improvement actions.

The Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan is a supporting matrix to the After Action Report. Together, the After Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) provides a roadmap for system improvement within the mission. The IP Matrix lays out which recommendations leadership has agreed on, and provides milestones and responsible contacts for each

item. The key elements of the Improvement Plan Matrix are for each improvement recommendation:

- **Essential Capability**. Essential Capability the improvement recommendation supports.
- **Issue/Area for Improvement.** Brief description of the challenge or area for improvement.
- **Corrective Action.** Brief description of corrective action.
- **Capability Element.** Which category the improvement fails into (Planning, Organisation, Equipment, Training, Exercise).
- **Primary Responsible Organisation**. This is the organisation within the mission which would be responsible for developing and implementing the recommended improvement.
- **Organisation POC.** This is the Point of Contact identified within the organisation to be responsible for managing the recommended improvement. This person is listed for follow-up purposes to provide updates on the implementation of the recommendation.
- **Start Date**. When the recommended action is anticipated to be started.
- **Completion Date.** When the team anticipates the improvement should be completed. This date provides a milestone to work towards. As many factors can influence whether something is successfully implemented, this date should not be viewed as firm deadline, but a target to work towards to ensure that the mission is committed to improving its performance and safety.

Sample Improvement Plan Matrix

Essential Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element[5]	Primary Responsible Organisation	Organisation POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Essential Capability 1: Mass Casualty Management	1. Police Units not prepared to manage multiple traumatic injuries.	Train all police personnel in the use of tourniquets and wound packing.	Training	UNPOL	John Smith	Mar 03, 2018	Mar 03, 2019
		Purchase 50 additional Individual First Aid Kits (IFAK) for police personnel.	Equipment	UNPOL	John Smith	Mar 03, 2018	Aug 03, 2018
		Conduct drills for all police personnel to promote familiarisation with IFAK.	Exercise	UNPOL	John Smith	Mar 03, 2018	Dec 03, 2018
	2. Procedure for arranging aeromedical evacuation of mass casualties appeared unclear.	Review and revise mission's Standard Operating Procedure for aeromedical evacuation.	Planning	JMS	Jane Doe	Mar 03, 2018	Sep 03, 2018
		Conduct orientation for revised aeromedical evacuation procedures.	Exercise	JMS	Jane Doe	Sep 03, 2018	Oct 03, 2018

[5] Capability Elements are: Planning, Organisation, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

Continuous Improvement Planning

Committing to implement the improvements noted in the SIMEX is demonstrated proof of your commitment to improving the performance of the mission as well as the safety of your co-workers and the citizens you have dedicated yourself to protect. Recommendations that have been accepted by senior leadership and are being implemented by the mission should be periodically reviewed and reported on until the implementation is completed. This is to ensure that the organisation or person responsible for implementing the change is receiving the necessary support required to effect the positive change in the system. As stated before, there are a variety of reasons why an improvement may not be implemented according to the timetable established in the AAR/IP Matrix, so it is important to review progress to see if any additional support can be provided to making the recommended change.

Senior leadership should take a keen interest in this process as they have a vested interest in seeing the mission perform at its best, as well as responsibilities to ensure the safety and security of the personnel assigned to the mission.

The actions or recommendations for improvement from the SIMEX should be reviewed at a minimum of every six months to ensure the changes are moving forward properly.

When you set about to plan your next SIMEX, remember to reference previous SIMEX AAR/IP to see what recommendations you can incorporate into the next SIMEX to validate the corrective actions.

Remember!

Simulations, proper evaluation, improvement planning, and the commitment to actually making recommended improvements support the mission throughout a crisis and can actually…

Save Lives!