

MOD Logistics Challenge Launches: submit your ideas

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The Ministry of Defence has established the Force Exploration and Force Variation Testing programmes to support the design of the future structure of the Armed Forces at the next Strategic Defence and Security Review.

The Force Variation Testing (FVT) programme identifies combinations of ways and means that will make the greatest difference in resolving the challenges we face. Speaking about this initiative, General Gordon Messenger said:

“Defence faces an increasingly diverse and complex range of threats and environments. To respond to these challenges we must look beyond traditional military solutions if we are to preserve or enhance our strategic advantage over the next 30 years, harnessing the expertise, imagination and ingenuity of our people across MOD, and our colleagues in academia and the private sector.”

“I therefore encourage you all to engage with our primary force development programmes Force Exploration and Force Variation Testing being run by FMC Capability Strategy, who are exploring how we address the challenges and exploit the opportunities we may encounter in future operations.”

As part of the Force Variation Testing initiative, the MoD is asking for ideas that will help meet some of the logistics challenges we may face in the future.



Logistics challenges

This challenge asks: ‘How can Defence further enhance its ability to provide logistic and infrastructure support to operations out to 2030?’

More specifically, it focuses on three main challenge areas:

Challenge 1: How best to project forces, at pace, in order to achieve early effect?

It is possible that the UK could achieve the initiative in a campaign earlier than currently planned if forces could reach theatre earlier. Specific points to consider might include:

- Can materiel (including ammunition) and platforms transported by sea, such as armoured vehicles (Challenger), arrive earlier than currently planned?
- Can we increase the speed and / or capacity of strategic lift assets?

Challenge 2: How best to sustain forces in theatre, from the global supply chain through to the ‘last mile’?

Specific points to consider could include:

- Could we undertake production of materiel closer to the front line?
- Could we find alternative sources of fuel in theatre?
- How could we enhance our ability to supply materiel that is required over a long line of communication?

Challenge 3: How can we protect a supply chain in a high-threat environment, while effectively sustaining a deployed force?

This is not limited to purely force-protection measures and could include consideration of:

- How to address single points of failure (e.g. warehouses), while maintaining an effective supply chain?
- How to avoid shortfalls, in e.g. stockpiles and vehicles, when war fighting at scale.
- How to ensure endurance of the maritime force, including replenishment at sea.
- How to meet a requirement to operate air at range.



Context

Over the past decade we have seen a resurgence of state-based threats, an erosion of the international rules-based system, an increasing threat from terrorism and the development of new technologies and threats.

These trends, along with those envisaged out to 2045, will require UK Forces to remain fully engaged in the World. Operations may include: protecting the Homeland, upstream capacity building, responding to a pandemic crisis, intervening in conflicts arising from regional instability, or responding to state aggression.

We must continue to seek new and innovative approaches and technologies to maintain our competitive edge. The UK has a rich history in innovation and The Force Exploration and Force Variation Testing programmes aim to tap into this to inform our future investments.

Submitting Ideas

As well as seeking responses to these specific challenges we encourage any other ideas that enhance strategic preparedness, global responsiveness or operational precision.

Defence personnel are invited to use the Ideas Card template and related guidance (see **Related Documents**) to submit ideas that may help address this challenge. An example of a completed Ideas Card is also accessible under **Related Documents**.

You have until Thursday 1st June 2017 to submit ideas. After this date, the team will submit the most promising ideas for testing by military planners in a series of scenario based war games and workshops to establish their usefulness. Feedback will be available for those submitting ideas.

Ideas that succeed at this stage will form part of recommendations made to Chief of Defence Staff and Permanent Secretary at the Defence Strategy Group.

For further information about the challenge, or to submit your idea, please contact:

The FMC Force Development Team, FMC-Cap-Strat-FD5@mod.uk, 020 721 81323.