



CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO DEFENCE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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The integrated defence resources management is an organisational approach developed in order to provide a tailored and suitable response to the security challenges within the Romanian society. It was assumed by the Ministry of Defence and it aims to bring a holistic image of the resources potential. The general purpose of the integrated approach is to put together the military and civil institutions in order to support and enhance the national security system by handling the designated resources. In order to develop and implement a managerial approach you have to start with the core elements of the approach. The subject covered in the article is centred on the basics and try to cover three main issues: the fundamental elements of the integrated approach, the factors that are interdependent and interacting within the defence resources field and resilience of the defence resources area.

Keywords: management; integrated approach; defence resources; resilience;



GENERAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Whether we are talking about the agrarian or the industrial ages or we are analysing the years of the current age, marked by digitisation, the human society can constantly include, destabilising interests and situations, their nature being, in general, economic, social, diplomatic or military. In this respect, the contemporary security environment is going through a period of accelerated changes, with a strong fluid character, as a result of the instability of international relations, of the evolution and dependence on technology, but also as an echo of the direct relationship between the available resources and the state's stabilising potential. The level of vulnerability has increased significantly; the exposure of the entire social spectrum to destabilization has been increasing.

In the context of the multiple crises caused by repeated pandemic waves, of some increased instability situations resulted from unsustainable international political-military decisions, the challenges of identifying and securing resources are progressively increasing. In this direction, this scientific material represents the synthesis of a research approach whose object of study is represented by the *integrated approach to defence resources management*. The article contains some of the main ideas and conclusions of the personal dissertation work about defence resources management (Nicoară, 2021).

Within the current challenging context, this article's proposed objectives point towards *highlighting the fundamental elements of this managerial approach, as well as towards identifying the advantages of implementing an integrated approach and the means to increase the resilience defence resources' field*. The premises this approach is based on, are, on one hand, that *integration is the basic principle in supporting and maintaining the unity of effort in achieving the goal/objective/mission set out in military actions/operations/campaigns, regardless of their level, and on the other hand, the resources*

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and, implicitly, their careful integrated management are defining aspects of a competitive approach.

We know that defence resources have always been a matter of interest. If in normal times, the resources themselves, their accessing process, as well as the management tools built around them have excited the attention of the political level of the society, in present times, all these have acquired vital characteristics. The current pandemic, as well as the turbulent international environment, are forcing us to enter a new stage and to try a different interpretation of the reality. We must understand the present times and the future ones through the lens of the new security conditions. The reaffirming of the force-centric policies, the economical weakening of some states and the rearranging of global influence vectors contribute to the creation of new regional and global geopolitics and geoeconomics benchmarks.

In this respect, the pillars on which Romania has based and maintains its security policy (we refer here to the strategic partnership with the USA, the membership to the North Atlantic Treaty and to the European Union, not necessarily in this order) are subject to considerable transformations and require a constitution or validation of the adaptability of states. On the other hand, the security of our country is threatened by a number of destabilizing factors that produce considerable effects.

Referring to the SARSCoV-2 coronavirus pandemic, we see the increasing of security level risks and vulnerabilities. The economic impact is already producing effects, both at the level of political-strategic decisions and in the micromanagement, strategies developed at organisational level. The effects cannot be temporally defined, as they have the potential to act in the medium and even in the long terms. The measures that the Romanian state was forced to implement in order to face the new challenges, aimed both at the administrative apparatus (rethinking the interaction between the components of the public administration, assigning new responsibilities or competences, etc.) and at how to relate to the resources necessary to solve the new challenges. In this context, in which the pandemic manifests itself through repeated waves of infections, the Ministry of National Defence has identified itself through the provided support, both in human resources (specialists in the medical, logistical or administrative field) and through the involvement of transport capabilities or critical situations management.

Therefore, the main motivation in choosing this research direction, the one in which the defence resources provide the integration framework and the object is represented, in fact, by their management, is given by the vital character. The unique place occupied by defence resources is reflected at the level of the defence sector as well as by the direct link between the achievement of organisational objectives and the quality of management of available resources. Whether we are talking about the management of the defence resources components – at the political-military level, or about the management of material assets from the military units' warehouses, the way in which the issue of resources is understood and solved is equally important.

Taking into account the multidisciplinary nature of the present topic and the intended purpose, here are both the applied hypotheses and the brief presentation of the methodological framework under which the research was carried out.

I consider the following statements as hypotheses of the present approach to defence resources management:

- resource management is the premise/foundation of the planning process at all levels: strategic, operational, tactical;
- careful planning of resources by the strategic level is an essential condition for resources management at operational and tactical levels;
- integrated resource management, whether we refer to the main components of defence resources at the strategic level or we are talking about the categories of resources used at the tactical level, represents a coherent response designed to prevent possible crises generated by the instability of the contemporary security environment.

In order to outline an expressive picture of the resource components of the integrated defence resources management, I consider that the following issues related to the field of defence resources need clarifications:

- a) What are the main decision-makers in the resource's allocation?
- b) What are the defining elements of the integrated perspective of defence resource management?
- c) Which are the potential factors in increasing the resilience of defence resources?



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Integrated defence resources management, through its specially identified and nominated components in the Defence White Paper 2021, is a response to the instability and uncertainties of the present, in terms of social and security climate. Also, the integrated approach to resource management at the operational and tactical level comes to support, punctually, effectively, the force structures involved in different national or multinational operations.

THE INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE OF DEFENCE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The evolution of the global security environment forces us to adopt an extremely cautious and reserved attitude on how to manage all categories of resources. The integration of specialised structures with attributions and competences on resources management as well as the their productive relation, the understanding of the need to implement a functional architecture at the level of the structures responsible of resource management (a system that has as objective the functional interconnection between the resource and the beneficiary through a network of structures with explicitly established roles and responsibilities) are real requirements for success in solving any type of security challenge.

The issue of resources is one, first and foremost, of a strategic level. The need for a coherent approach at political level, the challenge of judicious and timely use of resources, as well as the construction of functional relationships, at inter-institutional level, in order to come up with strong solutions to identified needs for defence resources are forms of response that come to prevent the challenges of the contemporary security environment.

In this respect, integrated defence resources management, through its specially identified and nominated components in the *Defence White Paper 2021* (Carta albă a apărării, p. 41), is a response to the instability and uncertainties of the present, in terms of social and security climate. Also, the integrated approach to resource management at the operational and tactical level comes to support, punctually, effectively, the force structures involved in different national or multinational operations.

The defence resources management is, in fact, a response provided at the political-military level, through programmatic documents, a reaction conceived as a result of the inflections of the contemporary security environment. Regarding this domain from Romania's perspective, the essential premises for the actions planned to be carried out are ensured through the proper resources management, in order to maintain an optimal security climate, at national level.

The legal framework governing the area of defence resources is based on the obligations, requirements and recommendations resulted from: the defence planning process of the North Atlantic

Treaty Alliance, the strategic concept of the Alliance as well as its political directive. Also, the security strategy of the European Union as well as other documents for planning operations are taken into account in building and updating of regulations. The national level strategic scenarios and the directions of our country's defence policy is intended to be built on, are also taken into account.

Thus, the strategic level documents, starting from the main pillars on which Romania bases its behaviour in the field of security are: the strategic partnerships (mainly the one with the United States of America), the signed commitment within the North Atlantic Treaty and the activation within the European Union, have the role of conceptually developing the main policies in the fields of national security and defence. Objectives are set, policies are developed, strategies are described and activities are nominated to lead to their achievement.

In the field of defence resources, the general framework at strategic level is included in the *Government Program* and in the *National Defence Strategy (2020-2024)*. At the department level, actionable directions are developed in the *2021 Defence White Paper*, the *Military Strategy*, the *Defence Planning Directive (2018-2027)*, the *Major Programs*, the *Annual Plans* and the *PPBES Specifications*.

While the *National Defence Strategy* assesses the international security environment and identifies potential risks, threats and vulnerabilities while setting out priorities and objectives, the *Defence White Paper* develops policies on integrated defence resource management. Also at the department level, through the *Major Programs* – documents that include a significant time frame (10 years), the Ministry of National Defence **allocates the resources** to achieve the established objectives (modernization, endowment, peacetime training, missions' preparations, infrastructure, international cooperation, etc.).

Analysing the provisions of the present legal framework, those of departmental level in particular, we can see in the recent years, the coherence in the approach of resources management, materialised in the perspective of **integrated defence resources management**. Thus, having as main objective “*the optimisation of the planning, allocation and use of the resources processes by the Ministry of National Defence*”, resources management is carried out in a modern,



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These commitments imply a double positioning of our country in relation to the defence resources: on one hand, they bind our country to provide access to other states to the capabilities of the Romanian armed forces and, on the other hand, they facilitate Romania's access to the resources of all the actors who have assumed these commitments.

multiannual and integrated approach. It is based on the components of defence resources: human resources, financial resources, defence procurements, research development and innovation, infrastructure and information.

The essence of this type of defence resources management, promoted and developed in the Romanian Armed Forces, is based on an integrated multi-domain management: force planning, anti-aircraft defence, command, communications, control, logistics, resources, defence information, standardisation, medical, research and development etc.

Knowing the geopolitical context in which our country can be framed as well as the regional security one and analysing the directional strategic level documents (Program for Government, National Defence Strategy 2020-2024, Defence White Paper 2016-2020 and White Paper of Defence 2021-2025) we identify the followings as priorities in managing defence resources:

- alignment with the requirements imposed by membership in the North Atlantic Alliance (maintaining the functionality of existing capabilities as well as generating and supporting new ones);
- folding on the security needs imposed by Romania's membership to the European Union;
- strengthening the strategic partnership with the US, by sharing human resources and by creating capabilities compatible with those of the US armed forces.

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If interoperability with the NATO armies' structures is a priority according to which the national defence capabilities were designed and developed, the major defence programs also centring in this area, I admit that the current trends in security at regional and even global level require the national political-strategic level to consider the opportunity to invest resources in the development of complementary and interoperable capabilities with those of the European Union armies.

The instability of the international environment, its identified threats and risks, as well as the uncertainties arising on a global scale regarding the establishment of new poles of geopolitical influence or the consolidation of others already outlined, produce effects (in the short, medium and long term) on the way defence resources for are managed.

Rethinking the way of planning, allocating and using resources, at the strategic level, is based on some defining features. Among these I mention:

- the economic developments of states in recent years;
- the financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic;
- the need for multinational financing of security capabilities;
- synchronised application of power instruments at strategic level;
- integration at the level of the interinstitutional mechanisms, of both the approach and the procedures.

It is the defence policy that sets out the national security objectives as well as the obligations assumed at international level. Both the development of robust defence capabilities, the increase of strategic credibility within the partnerships and alliances, as well as the provision of support in the emergency situations management to other public authorities, make it mandatory to cost efficiently allocate resources.

The adequate use adapted to the Romanian defence system of a managerial approach compatible with the defence systems of the member states of the alliances represents one of the premises for achieving the defence objectives. To this purpose, the military specialists considered it is time to develop an integrated defence resources management that would meet the requirements of the Romanian defence system. In the sense of adapting to the concrete conditions of the society, this integrated defence resources management involves a rigorous analysis of economic developments as well as the identification of both our country's and our main partner states financial difficulties. Rethinking the allocation and the use of resources, prioritizing investments as well as financing the maintenance of the existing capabilities and generating others considered useful are activities that need to be synchronised, within the integrated defence resources management processes.



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The main challenge that can be highlighted at the level of managing defence resources is the optimal allocation of limited resources, identifying and using real alternatives, in the medium (and long) term, in order to maximise national security, in times of instability and uncertainty.

There are many challenges that this defence resources management meets and there are implications in different domains. Thus, in addition to those resulting from the need to carry out a coherent analysis of all the alternatives for allocating the identified resources, proving cost-effectiveness, the challenges also refer to the need to satisfy the requirements of both the military organisation as a whole, and of the society. This approach aims to optimize the actions taken in relation to the identification, allocation and use of resources, as well as to increase the performance of the military organization by articulating all the activities carried out in a single, integrated manner.

Above its conceptual dimension, the integrated defence resources management refer to the timely and efficient use of the necessary resources in order to establish and use military capabilities necessary to ensure Romania's national security. Moreover, talking about management we understand the related approach of the planning, organising, command and control phases of the entire process.

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Starting from the premises regarding the development directions of the contemporary society with an unprecedented technological evolution – the technological revolutions causing both disruptive effects but, at the same time, creative impulses (Ullman, 2021, p. 30), of difficult to manage climate changes, as well as of a significant instability of international relations (of economic, diplomatic or political nature), this managerial approach requires the expansion of the spectrum of possible responses generated. The growing number of those arguing their plans to solve possible crises with defence area resources requires a real prioritization of needs. We will turn our attention to the same available resources, whether we are talking about a climate change generated crisis, one that is following a pandemic context or the need to protect the population from terrorism.

On the other hand, in order to be able to develop an integrated system that offers coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in resource management, two significant steps need to be taken. The first of these is the need for differentiation and specialisation of entities with roles

and duties in this area. Explicit roles, differentiated and punctual tasks are assigned to some nominated organizational structures, through differentiation and specialization (example: at strategic level, for the human resources component – General Directorate for Human Resources Management). It is also necessary to highlight the entity's level of authority in relation to different components or categories of resources, within the defence resource components.

After the specialisation of the entities involved in resource management, it is necessary to integrate all the actors involved in an overall architecture. This integration sub-phase enables the establishment of command-and-control relations, the construction of information flows, the detailing of the responsibilities for each branch, the necessary procedures implementation, the explicitly establishment of cooperation methods in order to ensure the decisional coherence related to the judicious use of resources.

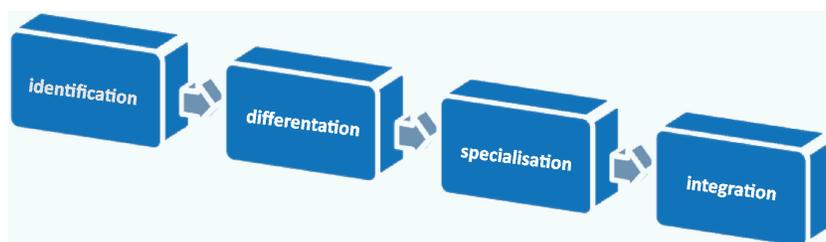


Figure no. 1: Stages in the development of an integrated management (author's view)

The identification of entities/structures with an active role in the resources allocation and management will be based both on the ones available in the public domain area but also on the potential of the private environment. This combination of public and private environments can also be a winning solution in the sense of increasing the resilience of defence resources domain in the contemporary social context.

The 2021 Defence White Paper identifies the overall objective of integrated defence resource management as “to optimise the process of planning, allocating and using ministry of national defence resources”. The essence of this type of management, at the strategic level, starts from the concept of *integrated defence planning*, which designates, in fact, the coordination of the process of developing and maintaining military capabilities in order to carry out the defence policy and to allocate financial resources.



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The value of the integrated approach to defence resource management is given by the potential to ensure and manage unitary, efficiently, judiciously and economically all resources intended for defence purposes.

The stated purpose of implementing and using this type of resource management is to ensure national security, in any kind of conditions (normality, uncertainty, post-conflict, etc.), through the optimal allocation and use of resources, in a medium or long-time frame.

I believe that the value of the integrated approach to defence resource management is given by the potential to ensure and manage unitary, efficiently, judiciously and economically all resources intended for defence purposes.

An integrated defence resource management system establishes the overall, global framework to allow the combination of the set of activities following each resource component, into a functional and coherent unit. This will take into account the integration, within the security area, of responsibilities, levels of authority, duties, processes, activities, as well as its own requirements and those external to the field. The influences that manifest on this general framework, which, in essence, is intended to be an integrative one, are not at all few: starting from the availability of Romania's resources, continuing with the legislative framing of the way of managing the entire spectrum of activities related to the defence resources and to the human resource capacity to understand the necessity of implementing such a management, all these are reflected either in the form of limitations and constraints or, on the contrary, as strengths.

Referring to the need to maintain a healthy security climate, we understand the need to involve a significant number of state institutions, whose activities are based on defence resources. One of these institutions is represented by the Ministry of National Defence which is, in fact, the main pillar of the integrated defence resources management.

On the other hand, the essence of this type of management is given by integrated defence planning. This concept refers to a particularly complex process aimed at coordinating the development of specific capabilities, in order to achieve the objectives of the Romanian defence policy. In order to achieve them, specific directions of action are established. These directions correspond to the areas of interest (national, regional, NATO, EU, etc.) and address the organisational levels within the institutions of the national defence system. Their synchronization within an integrated management framework can only ensure, in addition to adequate functionality, an efficient use of available defence resources.

POTENTIAL INFLUENCES IN DEFENCE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Taking into account the contemporary context described in the previous chapter, we have identified the following factors that exert a real influence on the way in which the resources management is conducted:

- significant reduction of some key categories of resources;
- the instability of the relations between the global powerbrokers;
- former empire's desire to extend their spheres of influence;
- the migration phenomenon taking into account the limited resources, the consequences of the long-term military confrontations, the governance in specific areas of the globe;
- terrorism and hybrid warfare, (with asymmetric threats and unconventional actions), extensive multinational conflicts (with variable geometry and with implications in all areas of PMESII¹). The extended national disputes transformed into multinational conflicts, with both state and non-state actors, have considerably influenced the global security environment and have generated the need for strategic reassessments. In this sense, the possibility of a conventional front is very small and tends to zero.
- SARCoV-2 coronavirus pandemic that has led to a generalized crisis: from significant problems identified in the health system, to divergent relations between allied states and to a significant economic downturn. Also, the involvement of significant resources in the research area, in order to identify real solutions regarding the immunization of the population, as well as the fight for the fastest access to the research products, led to tense reactions worldwide. The economic level decrease of many states, the significant number of deaths, the damage to certain sectors of the economy (tourism, food, etc.) as well as the significant increase of others (pharmaceutical industry, digital technology, etc.) contributed to the destabilization of economic relations between states.
- weakening the population's trust in supra-state institutions;



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¹ Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure.



An integrated approach to all resources is needed in order to strengthen the resilience of defence resources domain, and to prevent or manage the impact of such threats with the purpose of reducing or eliminating their consequences. It is necessary to align the resources intended for defence and the competences assigned to the various responsible institutions, in an integrative formula, under a unified coordination.

- technological evolution (the emergence of disruptive technologies and the need to adapt to the evolutionary trend);
- destabilising climate changes.

I consider that these factors destabilise the security of the Romania and, at the same time, increase the need for resources. They can act directly, through direct influences on the Romanian society/ status, but also indirectly, by acting on other states, endangering their stability, security or integrity. Thus, an integrated approach to all resources is needed in order to strengthen the resilience of defence resources domain, and to prevent or manage the impact of such threats with the purpose of reducing or eliminating their consequences. It is necessary to align the resources intended for defence and the competences assigned to the various responsible institutions, in an integrative formula, under a unified coordination. In addition, customising the components of defence resources (human, financial, research, procurement, infrastructure, information to which we can add those considered by us to be taken into account – digital resources) we will notice the need to involve specialized institutions (Army, Gendarmerie, etc.), the academic environment, the media factor, or some non-governmental institutions, in this mechanism of building resilience, etc. This whole area must be integrated into a comprehensive, strengthened and coordinated unified mechanism.

This paradigm of integrated management can play a significant role in increasing the resilience of defence resources domain. Through real tools, this managerial approach can facilitate a mapping of available resources, thus significantly increasing access to a general picture on the potential support needed to be used to solve a possible crisis.

The consolidated information flow through predetermined channels, the internal and intra-institutional procedural framework implemented, the informed reporting to specialists from different fields, contribute to the implementation of an efficient decision-making process. Through an interinstitutional, joint effort, undertaken within the limits of an appropriate legal framework, real objectives can be set to be achieved in an integrated management process.

In the current security context, accepting the coronavirus pandemic as the main trigger of a possible crisis, and understanding through the crisis “*the possibility of sudden changes that induce the threat to the fundamental values, the segment of emergency and uncertainty*”

(Chifu, 2021, p. 11), I consider necessary some clarifications regarding the capacity to address and manage crises, in the field of defence resources, in order to avoid destructive effects on the national defence and security system.

The need to increase the level of resilience arose as a result of state and society's need to adapt to the evolutionary implications of the security environment. The resilience of defence resources can be accessible through the use of a variety of instruments. Speaking of the strategic level, where, for the most part, resources are planned to be allocated in order to achieve the set objectives, the instruments that can be used are mainly based on defence specialists training, experience and knowledge. Thus, the allocation of resources for defence is based, mainly, on the availability of the human resources component at the level of the defence resources management. These instruments to increase the resilience of defence resources consist of:

- normative manifestations (both pre-existing to the onset of the crisis and those conceived and implemented with its onset);
- strengthening reserves and analysing their timely use (from all resource components);
- existing capabilities that may be involved in crisis management mechanisms;
- involvement of both public and private sector actors;
- identifying possibilities for creating stable technological chains, even national ones. Due to the pandemic context and the multiple crises caused, a significant number of equipment, products or technologies can no longer be produced due to the rupture of technological chains. The minimal or even stopped production on certain segments led to difficult access or even to the impossibility of taking possession of some essential equipment or goods. Thus, the reference to the most robust commercial relations could ensure the functionality of the production chains for some major importance equipment or products.

In essence, the instability of the international environment, the threats and risks identified at its level, as well as the uncertainties arising, on a global scale, regarding the establishment of new poles of geopolitical influence or the consolidation of others already outlined,



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have effects (in the short, medium and long terms) on the way defence resources are managed. The need for the most profound possible understanding of the security environment, the identification of all problems related to the provision of resources for defence, their proper management, in an integrated manner, as well as the development of the resilience of the field of resources will contribute, significantly, to the achievement of the set national defence and security strategic objectives, enabling efficient use of the available resources.

CONCLUSIONS

Inside the military organisation, we can speak, on the one hand, of a vertical integration of the implemented management, in which the developed strategies align with the fundamental strategy of the military organization, and on the other hand, from an operational point of view, of a horizontal integration, materialised by a high compatibility of the policies and practices developed in terms of resources.

The integrated approach does not refer to the overlapping departmental solutions on the allocation of resources but, the composition of a general concept, the establishment of a coherent national vision on its level of ambition in relation to the withheld resources and instruments. Strategic objectives can be set with a single, unified perspective. They can be carried out efficiently using resources and means from different social domains (research, human resources, infrastructure etc.).

Moreover, inside the military organisation, we can speak, on the one hand, of a vertical integration of the implemented management, in which the developed strategies align with the fundamental strategy of the military organization, and on the other hand, from an operational point of view, of a horizontal integration, materialised by a high compatibility of the policies and practices developed in terms of resources. In any of the situations imposed by the security context, whether we refer to a single military structure, or to joint forces, the interconnection of the components and their legal, procedural, linguistic compatibility or at the level of instruments, provide functionality to the defence resources management, giving it the value of *an integrated process*.

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