



UTILITY OF SCENARIOS IN UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC PROCUREMENTS CONDUCTED IN THEATRES OF OPERATIONS

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Currently, operational logistics is a significant challenge: to resupply Romanian forces located in various theatres around the world. Involvement in an international mission is contingent not solely on the mission's nature or the structures of the assumed forces but also on the requisites and logistical capabilities for supplying goods and services within the designated area. The international security environment is challenging. Political tension, military conflicts and economic problems have intensified security concerns. In this context, organizing the procurement processes efficiently is a major preoccupation for specialists. Moreover, the legal framework for public procurement opens up room for different issues. Given the multinational context and specific procurement regulations, the execution of procurements within operational theatres is exposed to distinct challenges compared to those encountered in the national territory.

In this complex and ambiguous environment, understanding the legal means of addressing challenges in the procurement field is desirable. Moreover, considering the importance of procuring goods and services to achieve the mission goal, a proficient procurement specialist is a crucial asset. In this regard, the main objective of this study is to demonstrate that Scenario-Based Learning could be transformed into a useful tool for preparing future specialists in procurement.

Keywords: procurement; operational logistics; scenario; theatre of operations; resources;



INTRODUCTION

Against the background of the current context of uncertainty and ongoing conflicts at regional level, the need to strengthen the European Union's security and defence policy and to support economic and political goals through action plans calls for joint efforts by all actors involved in this process. The National Defence Strategy for the period 2020-2024/SNApT (2020), which was drawn up in accordance with European security principles, promotes the concept of extended national security. The relevance and the value of this concept are divided, generically, on two main directions: one internal, with direct applicability at national level and the second, international, which concerns the external commitments that Romania has undertaken. (ib., pp. 10, 23).

Identifying trends in the evolution of security phenomena at regional level and analysing, with an anticipatory purpose, the premises of the future are current concerns within the military academic environment. Educating and training future decision-makers in line with the requirements of the present and anticipating the needs of the future is a priority. Taking into account the current security enhancement actions at the European Union level, the present research aims at modelling a learning scenario in line with the specific requirements of procurement planning and execution in international theatres of operations. Through this scenario we aim both to demonstrate the usefulness of this learning tool in the training of adults working professionally in the field of logistics and to bring attention to a current challenge in the field of operational logistics - procurement in the theatres of operations abroad.

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INTEGRATING CONTEXT

The field of national security and defence has a number of features that define its identity. Starting from its fundamental mission, on the fulfilment of which depends the safety and security of all Romanian citizens, this social field is characterised by a number of particularities. The complexity as well as the sensitivity of the problems assigned to its management require an adequate legal framework, an adapted institutional architecture, specialised staff and sufficient resources. In the context of current challenges and the degree of novelty they bring, the military system is faced with new situations. The achievement of internationally agreed objectives depends on the proper management of the mentioned situations. Operational logistics covers the entire range of activities that provide the goods and services necessary for the direct logistical support of the fighting forces for subsistence, training and participation in military operations/actions (DLIAR 2023, art. 0201-0206). Thus, one of its responsibilities is the resupply of Romanian forces in various theatres of operations. The proper understanding of the legal framework describing the field of public procurement, the managerial mechanisms that can be accessed and the importance of this activity in a theatre of operations become prerequisites for achieving the objectives of the missions undertaken.

The specificity of the context in which direct acquisitions or procurement procedures are conceived, planned and carried out, as well as the particularities of the way contracts are carried out in theatres of operations, require more than knowledge of the specific rules in force. Moreover, most of the experiences that the Romanian Armed Forces have had in theatres of operations have not required the planning and implementation of procurement processes, the provision of the necessary resources being achieved through other mechanisms developed within the North Atlantic Alliance and financially supported by the *Lift&Sustain* program of the US Department of Defense. The current global security context calls for the presence of Romanian military forces in missions under the aegis of NATO, the European Union, the UN or the OSCE, with different mechanisms for accessing

resources. The restricted need to use public procurement in theatres of operations has led to a certain fear and reluctance to apply procurement legislation in theatres of operations. The increase in the number of military structures in international missions sponsored by the European Union brings with it the multiplication and diversification of resupply needs, and the proper understanding and use of procurement legislation in theatres of operations becomes essential.

In this context, *Scenario-Based Learning/SBL* is a learning method that can be used to provide contexts for reflection on the ambiguous and complex nature of the real world. SBL opportunities bring multiple benefits: from leveraging collaboration, developing critical thinking, and the ability to solve complex problems (Norton et al., 2012), including, of course, in-depth understanding or familiarity with different problem-solving mechanisms. Such learning scenarios can be designed with the aim of bringing closer to domain specialists not only the estimation or planning of the procurement portfolio but also the actual execution of direct procurement or procedures as well as the conduct/monitoring of contracts in theatres of operations outside the national territory.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Based on the identified problem, i.e. the need to use appropriate learning tools for the target group, the main objective of this approach is to demonstrate the usefulness of the scenario in understanding public procurement in theatres of operations outside the national territory. In this context, the target group is represented by Romanian officers whose responsibilities may be directly connected or only partially related to the field of procurement of Romanian forces in theatres of operations. At the same time, it is necessary to mention three essential landmarks that have been taken into account in the design of the learning tool, namely: *the age of the target group, its status, and the purpose of learning*. Generically, this research approach has the following structure (*figure 1*).



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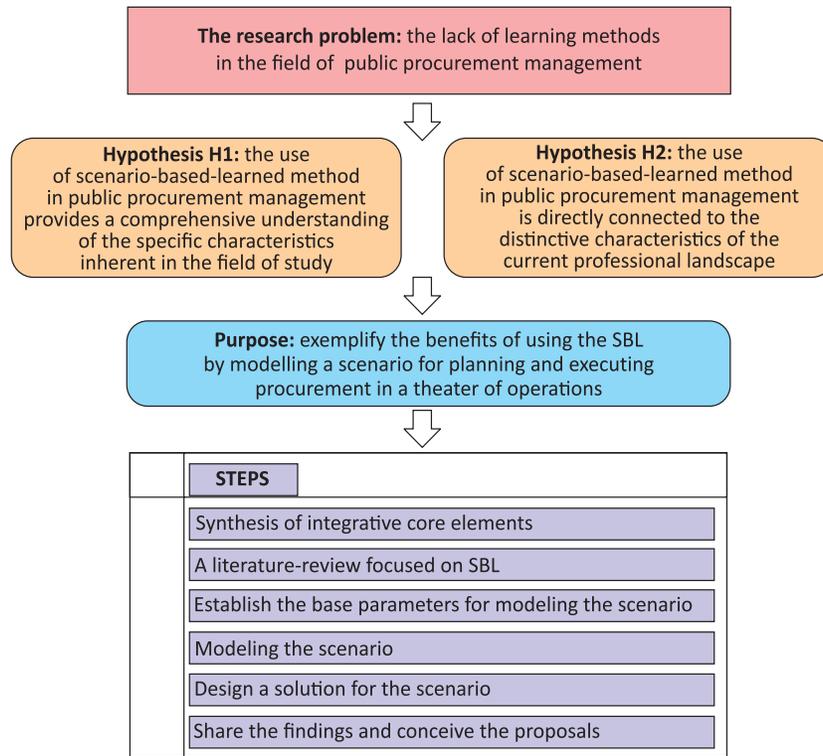


Figure 1: Main aspects of the methodological approach (Source: authors)

Scenario-Based Learning is a modern learning method used by Harvard Law School and Harvard Business School to reflect the ambiguous and complex nature of the real world.

RESULTS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, educational trends and theories have emerged that keep pace with the nature of the times and the life we live in, which aim to provide learners with knowledge, skills and positive tendencies towards what they learn (Areej, Sabah, Ban, 2023). In this context, *Scenario-Based Learning* is a modern learning method used by Harvard Law School and Harvard Business School to reflect the ambiguous and complex nature of the real world (Mehall, 2021).

The literature confirms the wide use of SBL in the educational sphere: from the use of scenarios in business schools (Rosenbaum, 2010), to the mediation of learning communication skills (Mariappan, 2023), mathematical thinking skills (Areej, Sabah, Ban, 2023), to the modelling and use of scenarios in experiments related to the medical sphere. In addition to the operational (concrete) goals that can be



achieved through scenario-mediated learning, the transformation of an ordinary learning process into a memorable one reinforces the trend towards their use in more and more areas. In addition, scenarios play a significant role in learning higher-level thinking techniques (Willingham, 2023, p. 76). Among them we can mention not only the ability to analyse and synthesise information but also critical thinking, connecting concepts from multiple domains, constructing a solution to a problem reflecting different situations of reality. Both the decision-making process and critical thinking involve, at the very least, taking in several types of information, interpreting them and constructing meaningful mental schemes, which are essential skills for any decision-maker working in the defence system.

Operationalising the concept of scenario-based learning in the field of public procurement, it can be defined as a systematic approach to the specific stages of a learning process in the field of public procurement using activities that describe contextual elements of reality from which, through active involvement, knowledge or working skills specific to the field can be acquired. SBL is based on the principles of situational learning theory (Areej, Sabah, Ban, 2023), an approach focusing on the importance of learning in the context of real-life scenarios. Anchoring in reality or describing, based on information, hypothetical contexts of the future turn scenarios into truly realistic tools.

The pandemic context as well as the connection of individuals' current activities to a wide range of electronic devices has led to increased passivity in learning. The development of such passive behaviours manifested by non-engagement in learning activities is detrimental to individual development in a fast-paced world. The demand for active involvement in analysing data, linking the legal framework to the situation identified, finding possible options, analysing the risks but also the opportunities offered by these solutions, compel the participants in the learning activity to filter, through their own effort, a range of information, becoming actively involved in the learning process. Mariappan (2023) said that SBL is a promising instructional approach that can make learning more engaging.

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Designing and presenting this scenario allows us to build, using appropriate information resources and giving value to personal expertise, a comprehensive picture of an actual or potential context. Among the (concrete) operational objectives that can be pursued by using this scenario in practice, we mention the following:

- Identification of the legal framework governing public procurement in theatres of operations;
- Analysis of procurement needs in relation to the specificities and particularities of the theatre of operations;
- The design of the planning documents needed to carry out public procurement (annual procurement plan);
- Estimating the value of procurement and identifying the procedures to be carried out;
- Analysing the potential for carrying out the procedures, taking account of the specific conditions (specialised staff, market to be accessed, information resources required etc.);
- Identifying the limitations and constraints imposed by the security context and so on.

These objectives need to be formulated in relation to the explicit educational context and may be reformulated, scaled or adapted.



We mention some related benefits of achieving the learning objectives, namely: familiarity with the specific activities of operational logistics in a theatre of operations, awareness of needs in the contemporary security context, increased confidence in one's own potential, improved analysis and decision-making skills. Connecting to the realities of the operational environment in theatres of operations leads to not only familiarisation but also preparation for a possible mission in such areas.

SCENARIO FOR PLANNING AND CONDUCTING PROCUREMENT PROCESSES IN THE VERDE THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

Scenario Design – Methodology and Approach

The concrete objectives pursued by this scenario can be divided into two directions. Firstly, we aim to develop a situation as close as possible to the reality in the theatres of operations to which our country is party. The purpose of presenting this type of situation is to underline and emphasise the national logistic responsibility, as provided, in its essence, by the NATO Allied Doctrine for Logistics (NATO recognizes that the ultimate responsibility for support of national forces lies with the respective nations). On the other hand, by outlining courses of action that consider possible solutions, we aim to provide relevant information from the sphere of current practice while leaving open the cognitive-analytical approach. At the same time, based on the proposed courses of action, an analytical process can be initiated with the aim of highlighting the potential for a paradigm shift in logistics support in the Afghanistan theatre of operations. Specifically, we recognize that it is desirable to outline a different set of principles for the support of joint operations of Romanian forces strategically deployed outside the territory of the Romanian state: while Romanian forces benefited from operational logistical support through the Lift&Sustain funding program of the US Department of Defense, in theatres of operations to which Romania contributes troops, at this time, the entire logistical

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responsibility for the preparation and deployment of the mission is in our nation's charge. Essentially, it is necessary to identify alternative options for innovative and cost-effective ways to support forces executing international missions.

Thus, we will carry out, in the scenario developed, the following cognitive and action analysis steps specific to the field under study:

- in the first part of the case study, we will create the premises of an international mission, under the aegis of the European Union, based on the Athena payment mechanism, which legislates the logistical responsibility of troop contributing nations (TCN);
- in the second part, we will identify the activities required for planning procurement outside the national territory, based on the legislation in force at the time, using different scenarios for situations regulated separately by the legislator. In this way, pathways will emerge that will lead to principled levels of understanding, valid in any legislative situation that may arise in the near or distant future;
- in the third part, we will give space to the resolution of specific procurement problems, through solutions that we consider possible and that can be of use for the further development of missions in theatres of operations in conditions of increased efficiency and economy.

General Situation of the Verde State

The Verde State, geographically located in the south of the Malerian continent, has throughout its history been at the confluence of the interests of the great empires and has never been independent and autonomous, but part of a larger political organisation. For this reason, the specific characteristics of the Verdean population are multiculturalism, ethnic diversity and religious diversity. After the Second World War, the Verdean state was part of the Ylian confederation led by the Ylian Communist Party, which was made up mostly of ethnic Ylians. Following the referendum in 1980, in which

the Verdean population, with a majority of 82%, expressed their desire for independence from the Ylian state, a satellite of the Red Union, dissatisfied with the differences in treatment and rights granted to ethnic Ylians compared to ethnic Verdeans, in 1981 the Verdean state proclaimed its independence, which was recognised internationally. In the same year, the Ylian state, with the support of the Red Union, through ethnic groups with Verdean citizenship, launched a broad hybrid and insurgent attack on the Verdean state, which lacked experienced political power, and its own military forces, adequate equipment and alliances created to ensure its own security. The conflict soon degenerated into a war between the Ylian military forces and the Verdean population, who had to form their own armed forces while the conflict was going on. UN forces tried unsuccessfully to stop the war, resulting in a state drained of resources, with more than 30% of the population killed or refugees, but with experienced armed forces and intact borders four years after the outbreak of war. By Security Council resolution and NATO intervention, measures were taken in order to stop the atrocities and the danger of escalation of the conflict in the west and south-west of the Malerian mainland, characterised by numerous disturbances caused by the hybrid intrusions of the Red Union, directly interested in extending its influence in the area.

The Special Situation

The NATO-led joint operations deployed on the Verdean territory for a period of seven months, by UN Security Council resolution, succeeded in stopping the atrocities committed by the Ylian state through political and military support of the Red Alliance, restoring peace and providing support for the normal functioning of the state's power elements. The Verde state still possesses poorly equipped armed forces, having a developing economy based on the exploitation of natural wealth, trade and tourism, terrorist, insurgent and secessionist elements within its territory, but the majority population desirous of peace, the state-independent union, and the desire to accede to the liberal-democratic values of the Western world. In a short time, NATO and international



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In order to accelerate its ascension to the Western Malerian Economic Union (WEUMaleria), which shares strongly democratic, competitive values based on respect for dignity, human rights, equal opportunities and the rule of law, the Verdean government has tried on numerous occasions to accede to the euma single currency, but has not been successful.

forums were able to hand over the authority to the Verde state and restore the instruments of power (political, military, economic, social, infrastructure and intelligence). NATO's presence on the Verdean territory was also significantly diminished, and it was taken over by the European Union. The purpose of the military presence under the aegis of the European Union was to maintain peace in the area, to monitor and deter secessionist elements and illicit arms trafficking, to identify security indicators to be made available to the political powers in the European Union and to implement the defence plan in the event of an imminent attack by the Ylian state or a Red-Ylian coalition.

In this context, Romania's Supreme Council of National Defence/CSAT has decided to contribute a manoeuvre battalion to the EU4FREE peacekeeping mission "Strong Together", intelligence, military police, communications and IT structures and staff personnel to the two headquarters in the Verde State area of operations. The Verde state's economy is strongly supported by the European Union, but the Ylian-Red investment in the area continues amid less support from within the Verde state. The economy is growing, with the procurement and payment system in the Verde armed forces being highly centralised, driven by suspicions of corruption throughout the state. The underground economy is developed, which is why smaller companies prefer cash payments. Energy supplied to the population (electricity, firewood, coal, natural gas) is regulated and is a state monopoly, except for fuel where there is strong competition. In order to accelerate its ascension to the Western Malerian Economic Union (WEUMaleria), which shares strongly democratic, competitive values based on respect for dignity, human rights, equal opportunities and the rule of law, the Verdean government has tried on numerous occasions to accede to the euma single currency, but has not been successful. The greeny currency of the Verdean state is relatively stable, but the population prefers to define prices in eumali.

The Verde state has been very open to the deployment of EU4FREE alliance military bases on its territory, aware that the allied military presence increases the sense of confidence and deters further



aggression by the Red state on its independence and sovereignty. The EU4FREE Headquarters has carried out countless procurements in accordance with the rules applicable to pooled funds (CFSP, 2015) and has encountered some reluctance in the initial phases from the economic environment in its early stages of post-conflict recovery about the security of payment for works and services rendered and goods supplied, but competition has increased exponentially as profitable business has been done with EU4FREE and as confidence in the presence and reliability of Allied Malerian power has grown quickly. The mechanisms for the use of pooled funds through the Althea mechanism are similar to the legislation of the Romanian state that has contributed troops to the EU4FREE "Strong Together" mission. This is due to Romania's membership of EUMaleria, with legislation in the field of public procurement being aligned with EU directives. The main differences between the legislative approaches to public procurement between EU4FREE and Romania are the following:

- EU4FREE is much more permissive in granting advance payments and advances, as well as direct payment of invoices for purchases of products/works/services whose estimated value does not exceed the threshold of €5,000;
- The value thresholds relating to the organisation of competitive procedures are different;
- NSE is obliged to receive certain opinions and approvals from the authorising officer in the higher echelon and from the General Directorate for Armaments of the Ministry of National Defence for purchases exceeding 75,000 euros (according to the estimation principles laid down by the legislator), an entity from which clarifications, guidelines and provisions are expected for such situations, given that it is the regulatory authority in the field within the Ministry of National Defence.

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The missions of the national contingents are carried out on a rotational basis, every six months, their missions being forward presence and deterrence, interaction with the population in the area, deployment to military units on the territory of the Verde state and carrying out forward presence and deterrence missions, as well as intelligence gathering and monitoring of security indicators.

Basic Data

The situation:

The Romanian contingent totals 644 military personnel, deployed in two EU4FREE “*Strong Together*” military bases, as follows:

- In the military base Pescici in the south of the Verde state, a military police squad of 32 soldiers, a communications and information detachment of 40 military personnel, an intelligence unit of 18 military personnel, 3 Romanian national representative and liaison personnel and 20 military personnel in the southern region headquarters of the theatre of operations;
- At the Mericenek military base in the northern part of the Verde State, a manoeuvre battalion of 450 military personnel, an intelligence cell of 22 military personnel and 21 military personnel in the EU4FREE “*Strong Together*” headquarters and the northern region of the theatre of operations;
- In view of the numbers presented, the CSAT decided to deploy a National Support Element of 38 military personnel, deployed as follows:
 - 32 military personnel in NSE North;
 - 6 military personnel in NSE South, subordinate to NSE North (Forward Support Element), with the mission of supporting the forces operating within the Southern Headquarters.

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NSE Mission:

The National Support Element provides general (mainly human resources and legal) and specific support to the 3rd logistic support line in the Verde State theatre of operations. Also, on the basis of Law 121/2011 on the participation of the Armed Forces in missions and operations outside the territory of the Romanian State, Law 98/2016 and GD 925/2016 on public procurement, as well as the Order of the Minister of National Defence No. M-97/2011 on procurement outside the territory of the Romanian State, NSE carries out procurement of works, services and products, on the territory of the Verde State, in particular for:

- Food for the manoeuvre battalion during movement and stationing in military units on the territory of the Verde state, necessary for the preparation and serving of food;
- Ecological toilets, where the conditions of execution of missions lack sanitary facilities;
- Spare parts for the technical equipment of the structures, shared with those of the national economy of the Verde state;
- Hiring of vehicles or transport services for the structures or personnel participating in the mission;
- Hiring of premises for the conduct of activities and accommodation of intelligence staff in intelligence units in the territory of the Verde state outside the deployment camps;
- Resupply of drinking water for structures and staff working outside the deployment bases;
- Procurement of translation services for structures and personnel carrying out missions outside the deployment bases;
- Purchase of the mobile communications service with the economic operators in the sector for communications needs within the Verde state;
- Procurement of various works and services for setting up Romanian camps and various national facilities in the deployment bases, installation and payment of utilities provided by the mission headquarters for the installed infrastructure.



The staff performing the tasks of the specific procurement function, together with the LEGAD (legal advisory) department staff, shall advise the NSE commander on specific issues, and the commander or chief of staff shall be responsible for collecting data and providing the procurement department with the necessary support through the specialist departments/staff.

In addition, the National Support Element in T.Op. Verde conducts deployment/re-deployment support in the area, provision of RSOM, allocation/removal of feeding entitlements in the two bases, resupply of specific Class III supply items through the EU4FREE “Strong Together” mission by settling the nation’s expenses through the NBC Athena mechanism, the hiring of various services (personnel and cargo transport, airport services, manpower, equipment hire), national strategic supply and re-supply, certification and sending of EU4FREE “Strong Together” invoices in-country through the above mentioned payment mechanism, as well as the settlement and payment of invoices for purchases and contracts concluded.

Settlement

A procurement procedure requires the cumulative fulfilment of a number of administrative and organisational conditions. They relate to:

- The ability to manage a budget or to be supported, by a superior entity, with a budget of funds;
- Having, in the organisational state, a specialised procurement department or a person in charge of procurement who has a minimum level of training in understanding the processes required to plan, organise and carry out public procurement;
- Having in place the technical means and tools to carry out the specific tasks.

The staff performing the tasks of the specific procurement function, together with the LEGAD (legal advisory) department staff, shall advise the NSE commander on specific issues, and the commander or chief of staff shall be responsible for collecting data and providing the procurement department with the necessary support through the specialist departments/staff.

In the particular case of support to forces deployed in the Verde state, the NSE commander needs support from higher echelons as well as from intelligence structures in order to know the “security situation, the operational needs of the supported structures and local customs”, which give particularity or hinder the application of national legislation. Also, although the Verdean population is strongly English-speaking, procurement documents for the structures may need to be



drawn up in the local official language. Details of the security situation, operational needs and local customs for the scenario developed have been presented above.

In carrying out the necessary procurement in the theatre of operations, the logistics staff of the NSE must cooperate with the structure holding OPCOM, i.e. Joint Force Headquarters, and receive the annual requirements for goods, services and works in the Verde theatre of operations from the (operational) force service headquarters and the armed forces services generating support headquarters. The measure of direct liaison with the highest tactical level headquarters is necessary as structures and personnel participating in missions in theatres of operations operate on a 6-month rotational basis and cannot have the annual budget picture (or multi-year projections, if applicable, in the Verde theatre of operations) for which the justification notes have been centralised and drawn up 6-8 months before the start of the budget year. However, the command, coordination and integration role of the Joint Force Headquarters requires it to initiate the whole process of planning procurement processes in theatres of operations. In principle, this task is a complicated one, as long as the JFH has operational command (OPCOM) and the force services administrative control (ADCON). We say this because the clarity regarding the logistical tasks of the JFH commander for the benefit of the structures in theatres of operations and the administrative tasks of the force services exercised on the structures they have generated within the same force packages, is far from ever having been delimited or regulated. Moreover, the performance of procurement in theatres of operations is more of an administrative task, yet the NSE, as a structure within OPCOM at the JFH, has the operational task of performing this activity. The analytical reasoning in this manner can continue until an acceptable clarification is reached, but it will be the subject of further research.

In order to sum up all the actions to be undertaken, the headquarters or forces involved in the procurement process, according to the scenario developed, we have found it appropriate to represent, schematically, the flow of information/orders/activities underlying the implementation of procurement in theatres of operations (figure 2).

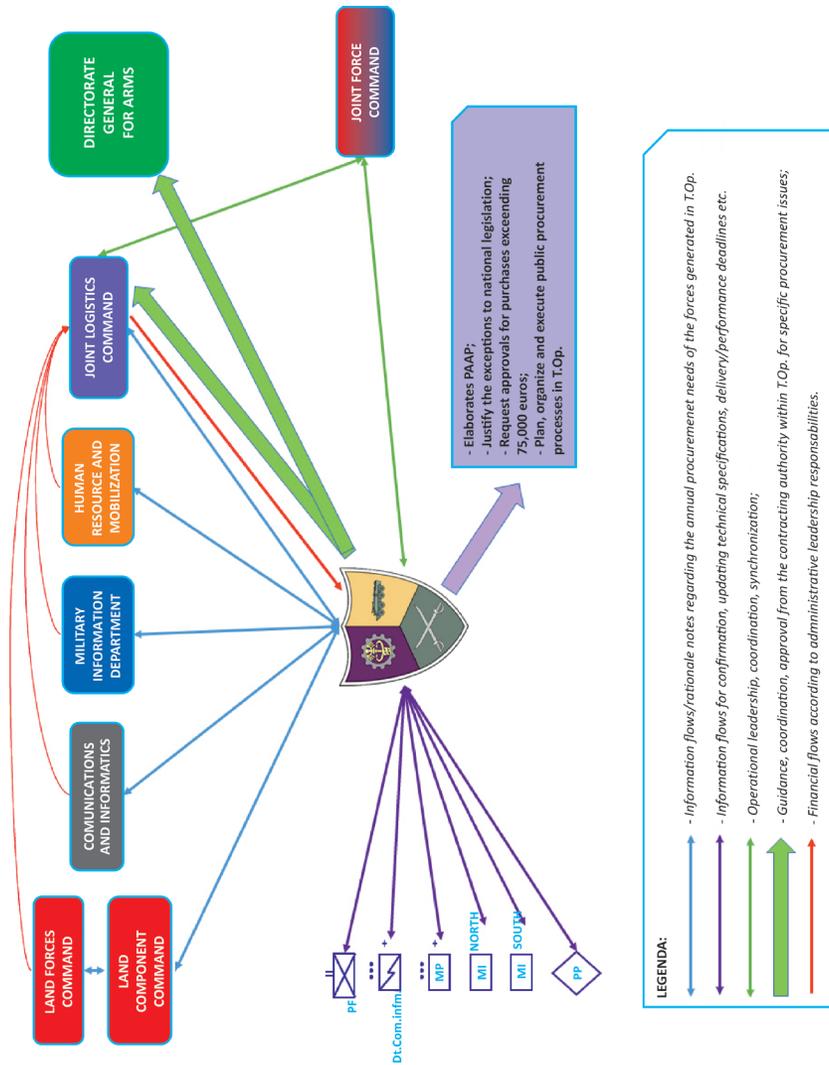


Figure 2: The main flow of information according to the developed scenario
(Source: authors)



From a legislative point of view, the procurement activity in theatres of operations is based on certain derogations according to value thresholds specified by the basic legislation and by the order of the Minister of National Defence as follows:

- Outside the national territory, the national legislation does not apply to purchases whose value exceeds the regulated threshold for direct purchases (which, at this date, is at the level of approximately 145,000 euros, expressed in lei, for purchases of products and services and 5,220,000 euros);
- For purchases not exceeding 15,000 euros, the commanders of the structures are authorised to make purchases outside the national territory;
- For purchases between 15,000 and 75,000 euros, the NSE, as the contracting authority in the theatre of operations, makes purchases for the benefit of the military structures participating in operations in that area;
- For purchases exceeding 75,000 euros, the NSE is obliged to request the opinion and approval of the General Directorate for Armaments and the senior authorising officer, i.e. the Joint Logistics Headquarters, from whom guidance, clarifications and provisions are expected, depending on the specifics of the theatre of operations, the degree of urgency of the purchase, the estimated value etc.

In order to determine the thresholds at which the needs of structures in theatres of operations are raised, the forces services must substantiate the needs to be procured and estimate the annual amounts in accordance with the only regulatory act that defines and describes both the notion of procurement from public funds and the criterion for estimating a procurement.

From this perspective, the following aspects related to the principles of public procurement are the responsibility of the various actors involved in the generation, operationalisation, management and execution of military operations in theatres of operations:

- In order to determine the thresholds at which the needs of structures in theatres of operations are raised, the forces services must substantiate the needs to be procured and estimate the annual amounts in accordance with the only regulatory act that defines and describes both the notion of procurement from public funds and the criterion for estimating a procurement;



- b) The armed forces services generating structures participating in theatres of operations must make available to the NSE the products, services and works that are the subject of procurement outside the national territory;
- c) Whether or not the products, services or works are subject to public procurement legislation (as is the case for the rental of buildings, for example, which is not subject to public procurement legislation), the NSE must centralise the requirements to be procured, draw up the annual procurement programme (as part of the principles of transparency and accountability, for each stage of the construction of the PAAP, under the signature of those who have drawn up the documents) and relate to the two essential values for the conduct of public procurement processes: 75,000 euros and 145,000 euros;
- d) For the categories of products and services exceeding these thresholds, the General Directorate for Armaments and the Joint Logistics Headquarters must issue clarifications, provisions and approvals to the NSE, which, according to the reasoning of the authors of this article, can be:
 - Directly procure products and services with values between 75,000 and 145,000 euros;
 - Register in the electronic procurement system for the conduct of procurement processes in the theatre of operations, a process visible throughout the European Union, in parallel with the conduct of an advertising process on the territory of the state in which the mission is deployed;
 - The delegation of procurement competence for requirements in theatre of operations to a specialised entity in the country, which shall carry out the procurement supply/provision processes in theatres of operations;
 - Order the conduct of procurement processes in theatre of operations, by the NSE, in accordance with the provisions of the European Union Athena mechanism, through certain

- mechanisms derogating from national legislation;
- Proceed further direct acquisitions accompanied by detailed justification for reasons of security, operational necessities, or local customs (a course of action deemed unlikely, given the specific economic data of the state, the mission of EU4FREE forces, and the level of economic development in the area).
- A combination of the above.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

The demands of the contemporary security context require us to take steps to ensure that we are able to provide appropriate responses. By identifying the issues posed by the new trends in reality, which manifest through evident threats to the security of the national territory, we have endeavoured to find suitable answers across various domains of society. In this regard, the present research provides premises for adaptation to the new reality, in two of the domains addressed by security threats: the training of Romanian officers and public procurements conducted in theatres of operations outside the national territory. Thus, to summarize the results of this study, we have formulated conclusions in relation to these two areas of focus.

The training of Romanian officers is required to be harmonized with the needs of the employing institution, as well as with the particularities and current state of human resources. In this regard, reducing passivity in learning, increasing the level of officer involvement, and establishing direct connections with subjects or content from professional reality represent fundamental criteria in didactical strategies. Operationalizing scenarios as a learning method in the military university educational environment involves active learning behaviour. Additionally, critical thinking is required, as is the applied use of concepts from multiple domains and the development of solutions anchored in current reality data. Leveraging the scalability of the scenario method in other domains related to public procurement will contribute to the development of analytical and critical thinking skills and ensure a common approach to solution building in the military professional environment.



The present research provides premises for adaptation to the new reality, in two of the domains addressed by security threats: the training of Romanian officers and public procurements conducted in theatres of operations outside the national territory. Thus, to summarize the results of this study, we have formulated conclusions in relation to these two areas of focus.



The practical application, throughout their military careers, of activities involving budgetary fund allocation and the completion of projects with significant implications in the field of public procurement contributes decisively to ensuring timely and efficient support for forces deployed in theatres of operations, regarding procurement-driven provisioning/services/works.

From the perspective of the practical issues addressed by the scenario, namely public procurement activities conducted in theatres of operations outside the national territory, our conclusions are results of the cognitive-deductive analysis method and unstructured participatory observation. It is worth mentioning that we are referring to a theatre of operations characterized by conclusive hybrid threats, as well as the existence of a developing competitive environment and continuously evolving European values.

The determining factor for the success of low to medium complexity procurement initiatives in theatres of operations is represented, in a dual manner, by the education-practice tandem. Both the commander of the National Support Element and officers specialized in logistics and public procurement must be educated to effectively carry out the planning, organization, and execution processes of procurement. Furthermore, the practical application, throughout their military careers, of activities involving budgetary fund allocation and the completion of projects with significant implications in the field of public procurement contributes decisively to ensuring timely and efficient support for forces deployed in theatres of operations, regarding procurement-driven provisioning/services/works.

Another relevant aspect of planning the public procurement process is the logistic informational preparation of the battlefield. Practice shows us that there is a tangential link between the logistic personnel composing the ENS and the intelligence personnel of the mission command and other cells/structures that include professionals in the field. Often, logistic information in the theatre of operations is incidental and contributes little to substantiating consistent, efficient, and effective procurement decisions. For the preparation of a high-quality logistic preparation of battlefield/LPB, it is necessary to include, within the organic structure of ENS, an officer specialized in logistic intelligence, who can accurately determine, with the support of the intelligence community of the EU4FREE "Strong Together" mission, the concrete economic environment in the theatre of operations (the level of development, the degree of experience of operators, turnover recorded in various branches of interest, corruption level, business



Providing genuine support to deployed soldiers who face both personal obstacles (such as isolation from their families) and professional challenges (operating in multinational environments for significant periods of time), often with limited opportunities for recreation and personal recovery, represents a tool that can lead to success and contribute to decision-making, morale, and camaraderie.

trust level, national investor structure, population and business owner trust in mission personnel, specific regulations regarding the provision/performance of services/works, origin of raw materials, specific prohibitions, payment security, commercial issues etc.).

In conclusion, the professionalism of the leadership elements involved in the administrative coordination of forces in theatres of operations and their operational command is crucial. Providing genuine support to deployed soldiers who face both personal obstacles (such as isolation from their families) and professional challenges (operating in multinational environments for significant periods of time), often with limited opportunities for recreation and personal recovery, represents a tool that can lead to success and contribute to decision-making, morale, and camaraderie. Targeted and applied training conducted domestically, familiarity with budget allocation, and application of specific procurement procedures are essential requirements for ENS personnel. Resolving support issues through procurement may lead to mission failures for participating mission structures and a decrease in the credibility of the armed forces within the multinational alliance community.

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