

SOUTH EASTERN DEFENCE MINISTERIAL PROCESS

A PLATFORM FOR ENHANCING RESILIENCE (SEDM/RESILIENCE)



CONCEPT PAPER

Motto: "Increased resilience shouldn't be just a slogan, but a call for action".

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Purpose

1. This Concept Paper “*SEDM – A Platform for Enhancing Member States' Resilience*” aims to develop a new project for SEDM Member States.
2. It takes into consideration EU, NATO, UN and PfP documents, recognizing the need to find more effective ways to promote and coordinate numerous regional projects, initiatives, and activities within the wider defence and security area.
3. The proposal was framed in accordance with the provisions of the *Agreement on the Coordination Committee in the framework of South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial Process and the Guidance for SEDM Projects Cycle and Function*.

Definition

Resilience is the individual and collective capacity to prepare for, resist, respond to and quickly recover from shocks and disruptions, and to ensure the continuity of the activities.

Timeline

No.	Actions preformed/required	Timeline	Responsible
1.	Delivering the draft Concept Paper “ <i>SEDM – Platform for Enhancing Member States' Resilience</i> ” to the SEDM-CC Secretariat for dissemination to Member Nations in order to harmonize their possible comments or proposals for achieving the approval in principle;	29.08.2023	Bucharest & SEDM-CC Secretariat
2.	Receiving the Member Nations comments or proposals;	November 2023	SEDM MEMBERS
3.	Update the draft Concept Paper based on the comments and proposals received from the Member Nations	12.02.2024	Bucharest
4.	Recirculation of the updated draft Concept Paper to the Member States	21.02.2024	SEDM-CC Secretariat
5.	Discussing the consolidated version of the Concept Paper at the SEDM-CC meeting in March 2024	28.03.2024	SEDM-CC MEMBERS
6.	Recirculation of the updated draft Concept Paper to the Member States, after the SEDM-CC meeting	June 2024	SEDM-CC MEMBERS
7.	SEDM-CC agreement for the Concept Paper to be presented to the SEDM meeting	September 2024	SEDM-CC MEMBERS
8.	The Concept Paper presentation to the SEDM ministers	November 2024	Bucharest
9.	The SEDM minister’s approval for starting a new project in the resilience domain	November 2024	SEDM MINISTERS
10.	Organizing the first working group at the expert level	Three months after SEDM approval	Bucharest

Introduction

What?	<i>What will be done? (actions, steps, description)</i>
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1. Given the security challenges that have emerged in the international environment with the outbreak of the COVID pandemic and further highlighted during Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine (an action that had a mostly regional impact), a new project to increase the resilience of SEDM members was proposed.
2. The proposal's main objective is to strengthen regional security and defence cooperation. At this international social and political moment, it is opportune to initiate a project of this caliber with resilience at the center of concerns. The biggest added value is the need for consensus at the level of internal and international levels.
3. The project involve work around the concept of resilience from the UN, NATO, SEDM-based line requirements for national resilience to measure the level of preparedness.
4. The project is tailored to complement, revitalize and boost the accession process for the SEDM member states that are still in various stages of accession to EU and NATO.
5. The project can be seen as a tool that SEDM, as initiative, can be grow using research and databases.

Project Aim and Outputs

Why?	<i>Why should it be done? (Justification, reason)</i>
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The project objectives are:

1. Strengthening the resilience of the SEDM member states that are still in various stages of accession to EU and NATO and aspire for full membership;
2. Ensuring clarity in the understanding of the term by both civil society and the military, in line with both UE and NATO domains of resilience;
3. Training in the field of resilience for military and civilian personnel, each in their specialty;
4. Delivering concrete, measurable, statistical results that bring a dose of authentic, real knowledge about the subjects under discussion.

Premises:

1. Living in a world defined by unpredictability and challenges, building and strengthening resilience has become one of the most pressing socials, economic, and military issues. Effective crisis management requires concerted actions.
2. Resilience is a complex concept used in various research fields to investigate how societies, institutions, and various basic systems, especially those related to security and defence, can withstand, react, adapt, and move forward in the face of destabilizing events and phenomena. These challenges can be sudden, shocking events, but more importantly, they manifest themselves as systemic problems.
3. Strengthening resilience is primarily a national responsibility, but individual Member efforts also make the SEDM Initiative stronger as a whole.
4. Thus, the need for effective theoretical, practical, operational, and efficient solutions, founded on complex concepts defined based on in-depth research and tested in different settings, require resilience-building measures as a fundamental condition for improving the functionality of societies, systems, and institutions exposed to the full range of conventional or hybrid threats and risks.

5. From the far-reaching effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and geopolitical conflicts to the consequences of pandemics, the growing signs of the effects of climate change, the ever-evolving hybrid and cyber threats, and the energy crisis, all components of the global and local environment, at the social and personal level, are experiencing turbulent times. As we continue to face these challenges, embracing institutional resilience appears to be the best solution.
6. At the EU level, the established indicators for enhancing resilience cover four dimensions: social and economic, green transition, digital and geopolitical.
7. Even if resilience is first and foremost a national responsibility, at the NATO level has been established seven baseline requirements for national resilience, against which the level of preparedness can be measured, as presented below:
 - Assured continuity of government and critical government services;
 - Resilient energy supplies: backup plans and power grids, internally and across borders;
 - Ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people, and to de-conflict these movements from (NATOs) military deployments;
 - Resilient food and water resources: ensuring these supplies are safe from disruption and sabotage;
 - Ability to deal with mass casualties and disruptive health crises: ensuring that civilian health systems can cope and that sufficient medical supplies are stocked and secure;
 - Resilient civil communications systems: ensuring that telecommunications and cyber networks function even under crisis conditions, with sufficient backup capacity;
 - Resilient transport systems: ensuring forces can move across the territory rapidly and that civilian services can rely on transportation networks, even in a crisis.
8. These requirements create an urgent need for preparedness, adaptation, cooperation, confidence building and accountability through the specific activities of this regional defence initiative.
9. In recent years, relevant international organizations with a vocation in the security and defence domain adopted resilience on their agenda, understanding that this approach is vital, impacting all other fields and projects. Thus, resilience has become a *sine-qua-non* component of both specific policies, institutions, and the basis for defence capabilities development.
10. SEDM's adoption of resilience on its agenda create the premises for developing and expanding all its projects, including the capabilities of its operational component – SEEBRIG. Being approached from the resilience perspective in their development processes, its projects will prove themselves to be even more efficient and resistant mechanisms, thus demonstrating its usefulness, higher capacity, and added value, both by strengthening the strategic profile of SEDM on an international level and in the operational environment, in the place and at the time the situation requires it.
11. By doing so, the SEDM regional cooperation format will be strengthened, ensuring an even closer connection to the resources and institutional mechanisms of the EU and NATO, and also will facilitate the Euro-Atlantic integration processes of its member states which share this objective. The region needs to identify what unites and what differentiates us, to build a safe and forward-looking region that ensures its resilience an important premise for evolution.
12. Moreover, having in mind the definition of organizational resilience as the ability to quickly recover or adapt to adverse situations or changes ("anti-fragile"), and considering that a successful organization must be able to withstand shocks, during this project, we want to draw your attention to a new supposition:
 - What if we considered normality as constant change and adaptation, and a period of stability, only as an accident, a short period that we should not be fooled by?*

Implementation

Where?	<i>Where will it be done? (location)</i>
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This project is proposed for SEDM Members and its partner, and activities related to this project can be carried out in any Member State, depending on national availability and the specificity of the activity.

When?	<i>When will it be done? (time, dates, deadlines)</i>
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1. According to the "Guidance for SEDM Projects cycle and function", The rotation of the Lead Nation (LN) is on voluntary basis (a minimum period of 2 years for the first LN).
2. A Rooster with the Leading Nation rotation could be established in order to have a predictable schedule.
3. According with *the Guidance for SEDM Projects Cycle and Function*, after the ministers of defence approval, within 3 months, the proposing nation organize an initial Working Group (WG) meeting.

Whom?	<i>By whom will it be done? (responsibility for action)</i>
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1. The project developing is the responsibility of each LN.
2. LN develop and conduct education and training programs, aimed to promote the role of NATO, and EU, offering access to specialized courses for future civilian and military resilience experts, such as Education, Training, Exercise, and Evaluation; Analysis and Lessons Learned; Doctrine Development and Standardization; Concept Development and Experimentation.
3. The overall research activity to could include, but is not limited to: societal resilience, resilience in the field of emerging and disruptive technologies, resilience of communication systems and novel technological ecosystems, resilience to crises and complex emergencies, resilience for ensuring continuity of government and critical services, resilience of transport infrastructure and resilience of the states in the vicinity of NATO an EU to anti-Western influences.
4. LN should take all necessary steps in order to provide a platform for strategic discussions and facilitating the transfer of expertise between partner states, communities, civil society, academia, and the military, to bring together collaborators through a consortium-based approach to work together to identify, test and promote real, effective and measurable resilience solutions, either tailored to each interested SEDM member state or in a general approach to the South-Eastern Europe region.
5. Through the implementation of the proposals outlined below, the LN and participating Nations will support efforts to achieve five of the eight key objectives of the SEDM:
 - Promoting mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation among the Members States,
 - Enhancing SEEBRIG's interoperability and capability for peace support operations,
 - Promoting the Euro-Atlantic integration processes of the SEDM member countries,
 - Implementation and development of SEDM projects,
 - Facilitating cooperation with international organizations.

How?	<i>How will it be done? (method, process)</i>
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1. The project interest is to cover a wide range of activities to fully understand the importance of resilience in the 21st century. Through this project LN organize international conferences (one

per year), facilitate direct interaction between international researchers and develop courses (at least one) aimed to the concrete needs of member countries.

2. LN organize meetings between the expert working groups (twice a year) to review the partial results of the activities and plan future projects compatible with the previous ones in order to exist a continuity and have proper results. During the planning process, Nations have the opportunity to propose subjects for discussion.
3. According to the interest expressed by the Member States, specific panels dedicated to resilience, its sub-fields, and related topics will be organized in various formats, such as standard working groups, in the margins of Coordination Committee meetings, or even on ministerial meetings.
4. LN, other Nation and/or SEEBRIG, on the voluntarily basis, could organize a phase for practical application at the level of the operational component of SEDM and within specific exercises, to validate and demonstrate the viability of the resulting concepts. One such approach would be to include a resilience component in the 2025 South-East Europe Simulation Exercise (SEESIM).
5. In addition, SEDM Member States can enhance their conceptual guidance for specific resilience policies and activities and then, evaluate their results through the provision of mobile training and evaluation teams, at request.
6. Moreover, if there is a need for countries to develop their resilience-related legal frameworks, the LN can organize seminars and roundtables dedicated to specific topics. This kind of activity can take many forms and settings, depending on each country's will and proposals.
7. Even more specifically, courses and other tailored training for both civilian and military resilience experts can be organized and hosted by LN.

Legal Issues

No aspects related to legal issues were identified.

Implementation Costs

How much?	<i>How much will it cost to implement? (cost or expenses involved)</i>
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1. By the *Agreement on the Coordination Committee in the framework of South-Eastern European Defence Ministerial Process*, the participating nations will be responsible for covering the expenses of their participating delegations to the established events under the aegis of this project.
2. The project Leading Nation will be responsible for those aspects covered in the *Guidance for SEDM Projects Cycle and Function*, including, but not limited to: hotel reservations, internal transportation, meeting facilities, welcome reception and official dinner.
3. All final products of this project will be delivered free of charge to SEDM member states.