

Operations Support



In 2014 the European Defence Agency (EDA) developed a structured and comprehensive approach to support EU Operations as part of its mandate to support the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This has led to a number of initiatives that makes a direct and tangible contribution to ongoing EU missions and/or operations.

Workstrand goals

- Promoting EDA projects and expertise to EU Operation Commanders
- Providing contracting support and assistance to CSDP military and civilian operations/missions and/or interested Member States as well as other EU bodies, institutions and agencies

Detailed description

Projects and expertise

The EDA systematically promotes projects and expertise developed within its framework to EU Operation Commanders. The objective is to improve value for money with a view to fulfilling the requirements of the end users.

Operation EUFOR RCA in the Central African Republic served as a test case of this approach. With the support of the European External Action Service (EEAS), a dialogue was established in the early stages of the operation. This allowed EDA to provide cyber awareness seminars to 150 members of EUFOR RCA's operational headquarters in Larissa, as well as an EDA-developed human resources management software (JIFAS).

A similar approach has been taken during the launch of Operation SOPHIA/EUNAVFOR MED. In addition to Cyber awareness seminars and the use of an EDA-developed human resources management software, EUNAVFOR MED is using the MARSUR networking project developed within the framework of the Agency to facilitate common maritime situational awareness. OHQ SOPHIA is also testing a software application, named GeohuB, developed jointly by EDA and EU SatCen which provides a centralised environment for geospatial information sharing and analysis.

The European Defence Agency also tested an EDA-funded "Smart Energy Camp" demonstrator in the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali. The demonstrator was installed in October 2015 and positively analysed the benefits of integrating new technologies into traditional power grids for deployed camps.

Contractor support

When capabilities required in operations are not available, contracting commercial solutions to alleviate shortfalls can be an option. The Agency combines industry knowledge, in-house technical expertise and experience in procurement, which can support CSDP operations/missions and Member States in their procurement procedures and save scarce resources. EDA offers support for ad-hoc procurement as well as pre-mission solutions.

Ad-hoc procurement

In 2014, the expertise of the Agency was requested by Operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The EDA provided assistance for the contracting of Air-to-Ground

Surveillance (AGSR) services. A procurement arrangement was signed with the Operation Commander and allowed the Agency to assume the lead role in administering the procurement procedure.

Further to this pilot case, a Cooperation Arrangement was signed in 2015 with Athena, the mechanism established to administer the financing of the common costs of European Union operations having military or defence implications, to facilitate contracting support to CSDP operations. Under this arrangement, the Agency has supported several missions with inter alia procurement of special and armored vehicles, medical equipment or to analyse cost-benefit of outsourcing camp management. EDA also offers a web-based Contractor Support to Operations (CSO) Platform, which serves as a forum for interaction between contracting authorities and economic operators.

Pre-mission solutions

The EDA EU SatCom Market project was developed in 2009 to efficiently and cost effectively provide Members States with an option to commercially source satellite communications and related services through the European Defence Agency (EDA). In June 2015, the Athena Mechanism joined EDA's EU SatCom Market. It provides a blueprint of how EDA can support CSDP missions and operations with turnkey solutions.

With the Athena Mechanism as a member all military CSDP operations can pool the demands for purchasing satellite communications and related services with other EU Member States that are already part of this initiative, reducing costs for all. Since February 2016, CSDP civilian missions are also making use of this joint procurement scheme in Niger, Mali, Ukraine, Georgia and Somalia. This is a perfect example of concrete and effective civil-military synergy in the framework of CSDP.

As to the future, EDA is supporting relevant EU bodies in exploring how other areas could benefit from similar contracted service solutions, in particular in-theatre medical evacuation, field hospitals and camp management.

Figures

- Three CSDP military operations and two CSDP military training missions supported with various EDA projects since 2014;
- Five civilian and two military CSDP missions supported with SatCom since 2015;

For more information contact the EDA Operations Support Unit at cps@eda.europa.eu.

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