The Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre hosted the NATO Lessons Learned Conference in Lisbon, Portugal from 25 to 27 October 2011. The conference theme was: “Extracting Lessons from Operations”.

The format for this year’s conference differed greatly from previous years, where the focus was on the NATO Lessons Learned (LL) Capability and Process and was aimed at LL Practitioners, examining how NATO can implement lessons learning in our organizations. This year the focus was instead on lessons from operations and was aimed at the operators—at those who are best placed to identify lessons and who in turn must learn lessons if the organization as a whole is to improve.

The conference was centred around a compelling series of panel discussions where relevant and intriguing lessons from current NATO operations were presented, discussed, and shared. The panel topics were:

- Lessons from Operations – National Perspectives
- Capturing Lessons from Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR
- Instituting a Comprehensive Approach in ISAF
- Sharing Information in Counter-Piracy Operations
- Leadership Perspectives – Driving Learning inside our Organizations

During the conference, there was also a breakout session held with the representatives from participating Centres of Excellence. This session highlighted the need to coordinate the JALLC and COE Programmes of Work and for greater efforts to increase the contact and mutual support among us.

From my point of view, the conference was a success to a certain degree. Despite our efforts to include operators, attendees were overwhelmingly LL Practitioners. This limited our ability to spread the most important message to arise during this conference—That we are all members of the LL Community!

Operators must help LL Staff by recognizing what they are learning and what of that learning may have value for others, now or in the future, and informing them. Yet, too often I heard during this conference from operators, when asked how the insights they have gained are being included in the LL process: “I don’t know, you’d have to ask our LL staff”. This is not the right answer!

Operators must engage with LL practitioners to share what they have learned. Operators cannot passively wait for the LL Staff Officer or a JALLC Analyst to come round and interview them. They must take the time to formally share their individual, branch, or unit level learning with the LL Practitioners. Armed with this new learning, LL practitioners must engage their leaders in driving needed organizational change.

And this brings us to second important message to arise from the conference—the concept that each of us must champion learning, not just for the overall LL Process and Capability, but for individual lessons that we as military thinkers believe are important.

What does it mean to be a champion of learning? It means LL practitioners must be involved in planning, in ops, and in after action reviews so that they know what is being learned in their unit or organization. As Champions of Learning, LL Practitioners must engage with operators to help them capture and record the learning being done in their organizations.

And LL Practitioners must be persistent in engaging our leaders, pestering them if necessary. The squeaky wheel gets the grease after all. And it must be the LL Practitioners to do this because operators are often too busy operating to pester leaders after the issue has been resolved internally. They have moved on.

LL Practitioners cannot limit themselves to being champions of a mere LL Process as some mechanistic, bureaucratic and administrative burden. We must use the Capability and Process to champion LEARNING!!!

This is the message I want to leave you with and the message I ask you to take back to your home organization.

Peter Sonneby
Brigadier General, Danish Air Force
Conference Agenda

**Day 1 – 25 October**

*Opening Remarks* – BG Peter Sonneby, Commander JALLC

**Panel:** Lessons from Ops – National Perspectives

Lessons from Operations Panel Intro – LTC Blake Nash, JALLC

**Australian Perspective** – Mr Iain Cruickshank, Manager, Adaptive Warfare Branch Australian Army

**USA Perspective** – COL Thomas ROE, Director US Center for Army Lessons Learned

**Danish Perspective** – COL Karsten Schultz, DCOS Ops Danish Contingent to OUP

Panel Discussion: Lessons from Operations – National Perspectives

**NATO HQ Update** – Ms Silvia Maretti, NATO HQ IS Ops

**Panel:** Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR

OUP Panel Intro – COL Frédéric Curtaz, JALLC

**ODYSSEY DAWN** – Lessons from the Handover – LTC Randy White, JCOA

**OUP – Strategic Perspective** – LTC Paul Fleet, SHAPE Strategic Planning Directorate

**OUP – Operational Perspective** – BG Rob Weighill, CJTF OUP Director Ops

**OUP – Component Perspective** – MAJ Andrew Fogarty, CFAC ACCE Targeting

Panel Discussion: Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR

**Day 2 – 26 October**

*Panel:* ISAF Comprehensive Approach

ISAF Comprehensive Approach Panel Lead-In – LTC Del Hierro, HQ SACT

Comprehensive Planning in Afghanistan – Mr Lars Jensen, SCR Director Ops

Building the ISAF Medical House – CAPT Dominic Whitehouse, ISAF Medical Advisor

Panel Discussion: ISAF Comprehensive Approach

**Panel:** Information Sharing in Counter-Piracy

Counter-Piracy Info Sharing Intro – COL Nick Lipscombe, JALLC

OCEAN SHIELD Operational Perspective – CDRE David Wolfe, JFC Lisbon KMD Director

Fighting Piracy: From a Reactive to a Proactive Approach – CDRE M.B. Hi jmans, Former COM SNMG2/CTF508

Lessons from Information Sharing – LTC Marek Przymanowski, JALLC

Panel Discussion: Information Sharing in Counter-Piracy

**Day 3 – 27 October**

**Leadership Perspectives**

Leadership Perspectives – BG Steven Salazar, US Joint Staff, Assistant Deputy Director, Joint Development, J7

Leadership Perspectives – COL Otto Radlmeier, Director, Military Engineering Centre of Excellence

Leadership Perspectives – RADM Bartolomé Bauza, Director Operation Preparation Directorate

Leadership in Lessons Learned: Open Discussion – COL Frederic Curtaz, JALLC

**Conference Closure**

Keynote Speaker – LTG Philippe Stolz, Commander JFC Lisbon

Closing Remarks – Becoming Champions of Learning – BG Peter Sonneby, Commander JALLC
Much has changed in the Lessons Learned community since the 2010 NATO LL conference, and for this reason a ‘Pre-Conference Day’ was held at the Portuguese Military Academy on Monday 24 October. Ninety-Six LL stakeholders participated in a day of briefings which paved the way to the more operationally-focused proceedings on the following three days of the conference.

The day was opened by LTC Blake Nash (CAN A), who welcomed the delegates and set the scene for the day’s activities, which comprised updates from key organizations and some background briefings for LL newcomers.

Colonel James Miller (USA F) provided an update on ACT activity, including updated ACT priorities following the Lisbon Summit in 2010, in which LL play a considerably higher profile part.

Commander Nevzat Ozkan (TUR N) provided an update from SHAPE, including significant successes in raising the profile of LL in strategic OPLANs, the role of LL in PMRs, increased coordination activity with NSA, and of course the LL component of the recent Operation Unified Protector.

LTC Nash returned to the podium to provide an update on JALLC activities over the previous year, which included short-notice support to Operation Unified Protector and the Defence Output Metrics Projects.

LTC Francesco Andreani (ITA A), a recent alumnus of the NATO LL Staff Officer’s Course and current Chief LL at HQ ISAF, provided a very positive brief on the development of LL in ISAF over the past two rotations. LTC Joe Hall (USA F) closed the morning’s proceedings with a fascinating look into the world of the NATO Standardization Agency.

In the afternoon a delegation of Centre of Excellence representatives were hosted at the JALLC by the Commander, BG Peter Sonneby (DNK F), during which a number of lesson sharing initiatives and future possibilities for cooperation and coordination between COEs and JALLC were discussed.

Back at the conference location, Mr Andrew Eden (GBR C) provided some revision to the conference audience about the NATO LL Capability, including the LL process and Ms Jackie Eaton (GBR C) discussed Analysis Requirements and Analysis Objectives, noting the importance of establishing analysis projects on a firm footing of a coherent requirement. Mr Paulo da Silva (PRT C) provided a very enlightening briefing on the opportunities presented by MS Sharepoint to Capture LL, sharing some of the mysteries of this highly adaptable tool which is a perfect platform for the LL process. The Update Day was concluded by LTC Hajdic (HRV A) with a briefing on the continuing LL Portal development and the current state of the NATO LL Data-
ALLC was honored to welcome Lieutenant General Philippe Stoltz, Commander Allied Joint Force Command Lisbon, to deliver the keynote address. During his address, General Stoltz eloquently addressed both the key challenges he thinks need to be overcome for lessons learned to be truly effective and provided examples of how his command is currently using lessons from the application of previous deployable forces concepts to inform their work developing NATO’s new deployable joint headquarters concept.

General Stoltz highlighted four key challenges to leveraging lessons learned. First he reinforced General Salazar’s point during the leadership panel, that lessons need to reach the right audience. For example, the Special Forces are able to learn lessons quickly, but many of the solutions they find are also applicable to the wider force. How can we help those lessons to be implemented in slower time throughout the entire force?

The second challenge, he felt, was the temptation to develop an overreliance on lessons learned. The risk here is that the military will only be able to fight the last war effectively. The ability to fight the next war effectively relies on an open mind, innovation, and creative solutions as well as a focus on lessons learned.

Thirdly, he pointed out the difficulty in capturing lessons where the learning has become so engrained, the people involved don’t realize they have a lesson to share. People take for granted the solutions they have found that helped them to overcome a problem while others, elsewhere in the organization, may still be struggling with a similar problem. He proposed that in some cases, independent observers can be the key to identify these lessons.

The final of his four challenges, was the role that political constraints play in limiting the way we operate. Lessons need to be applicable within the political constraints that are always present in NATO. Otherwise leaders are not able to act upon them and the problem will persist.

As a parting gift to the Alliance, Joint Force Command Lisbon will provide a new deployable joint headquarters concept. Work is currently ongoing to develop this concept and General Stoltz has gone to great lengths to ensure the concept builds on the lessons of previous deployable Joint HQ concepts. At the heart of the new concept are the principles of flexibility, sustainability, and adaptability: Flexibility to respond to the diverse set of activities specified in NATO policy with a variety of command element options; Sustainability based on the need to maintain only a core of 250 HQ personnel permanently ready to deploy; and Adaptability to bring both NATO Command Structure and NATO Force Structure elements together using a single deployable Joint HQ concept.

General Stoltz has shown us all how to be a leader engaged in lessons learned. His staff have overcome the challenges of LL in their development of the new NATO deployable Joint HQ concept. They have found the lessons they need to inform their work, maintained an innovative future-facing mindset, involved independent analysis, and developed a solution that can be applied within the political constraints of the organization. His commitment for his staff to incorporate lessons learned into their everyday activity proves once again that leadership is the critical success factor to overcome the challenges faced in learning lessons.
The idea behind the Leadership Perspectives discussion was to bring to light the essential nature of leadership engagement in creating learning organizations. True organizational learning only takes place when driven by leaders. Commanders and Chiefs of Staff must prioritize lessons, assign and track remedial actions, follow up to ensure their organization has actually learned and, just as important, be the driving force for sharing lessons. Leaders’ Lessons Learned guidance and engagement must be evidenced not only by words, but through their actions by holding both Operators and Lessons Learned Practitioners accountable.

The leadership panel was opened by Brigadier General Salazar. His mantra was that “leaders need lessons so they can avoid ‘oh no’ moments – Pain avoidance is what LL is all about.” How can we make sure that the lessons of the individual soldier are reaching the rest of the organization? The solution he believes is to find senior champions to inform leaders throughout the organization of the lessons they need to learn.

Colonel Radlmeier provided an alternative view from a leader in the midst of trying to support lessons learning in a functional area. The COEs have a role as an “information multiplier” to support learning on, in this case, military engineering issues for everyone, not just military engineers. But in the end, the COEs rely on leaders to find the information they need and act upon it to complete the LL process.

Rear Admiral Bauzá made the point that the military are good at looking to the future, at planning what they want to do next, but are not always very good at looking to the past to inform that planning. Time spent on incorporating lessons into preparation is never wasted time and the quality and usability of the plans and SOPs the NRF employed most recently were testament to that.

Ultimately, and through the discussion session, it became clear that a leader’s wants and needs from a lessons learned process depend on whether the leader’s organization is a consumer or supplier of lessons, or both. The challenge of how to link together the supply of lessons with the consumers of those lessons was a recurrent theme throughout the panel. Only when the right lessons are reaching the right people at the right time will lessons meet their potential to support us all to do more with less, and avoid needless loss of life on the battlefield.
Lessons From Operations Panel

National Perspectives on Extracting Lessons from Operations

Moderator: LTC Blake Nash JALLC
Panel Members:
Mr. Iain Cruickshank, Australian Army;
LTC Chris Pappas, US Joint Staff J7;
Colonel Thomas Roe, Director CALL;
Colonel Karsten Schultz, Danish Air Force

The Lessons From Operations panel was led off by a briefing from Mr. Cruickshank. He provided insight into the Australian Army’s challenges of turning lessons learned into actions and results. With the various deployment cycles and ongoing support in three theaters, the Army’s Adaptive Branch continues to refine their Lessons Learned process to expedite results to deploying units.

LTC Pappas from the US Joint Staff then discussed the J7 Directorate’s overview and their Joint Lesson Learned Program (JLLP) process and timeline. There have been some recent changes in the overall organization structure in the wake of US Joint Forces Command being disestablished. This was followed by Colonel Roe of the US Army’s Center Army Lessons Learned (CALL) presenting their structure, Lessons Learned Forum, and working groups. He stated that with all the current ongoing operations that this is “an emerging time for CALL”.

A final presentation was given by Colonel Schultz on recent lessons identified from air operations conducted over Libya by the Royal Danish Air Force.

The Question and Answer session provoked candid discussions from all the panel members. Colonel Roe was asked how they incorporate international interactions into Lessons Learned and he cited as a recent example how CALL worked directly with the Jordanian Lessons Learned Center on cooperative information sharing. Mr. Cruickshank and Colonel Roe responded to a question on influencing and involving leadership in the LL process. They explained that it is part of an ongoing cultural change and that leadership buy-in requires confidence in the Lessons Learned processes and system.

They key panel takeaways that were discussed are: Must be adaptive in different environments; Simplification; Leadership buy in; and Collaboration are key to Lessons Learned from an operator’s perspective.
Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR Panel
Capturing Lessons from an Operation as it Unfolds

Moderator: Colonel Frédéric Curtaz, JALLC

Panel Members:
BG Rob Weighill, CJTFUP Ops Dir
COL Fernando Crespo, JFC Naples, JPALL Dir
LTC Paul Fleet, SHAPE, CPP, SOPG
CDR Jon Carriglitto, MC Naples, INFO OPS
MAJ Andrew Fogarty, CFAC Izmir

In keeping with the current NATO operational tempo, the Tuesday afternoon panel featured Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR and those processes employed to capture lessons learned from NATO’s 2011 involvement in Libya. Before kicking into UNIFIED PROTECTOR proper, LTC Randy White, from JCOA, briefed the group on lessons from the handover Operation ODYSSEY DAWN to NATO.

The panel briefings began with LTC Paul Fleet of SHAPE Strategic Planning Group. He discussed the SHAPE level processes, and gave a thorough overview of how the Strategic Operation Planning Group captured lessons in the NATO operational environment, stressing that the lessons learned process must be constant throughout, integrated into the planning of any operation from the outset.

LTC Fleet was followed by General Weighill, CJTFUP Operations Director, who joined via teleconference, and provided an ongoing operational view of the integration of the lessons learned process into the conduct of a major multinational operation. Major Andrew Fogarty, CFAC ACCE Targeting, gave the final briefing for the panel, highlighting those OUP lessons learned from the air operations perspective.

Colonel Fernando Crespo, JFC Naples Lessons Learned, and Commander Jon Carriglitto, from Maritime Command Naples augmented the speakers for the panel discussion, which provided an opportunity to broaden the scope of the initial briefs and allowed for clarification of several points of concern. Discussions centred on the integration of Special Operations Forces and civilian entities into the OUP planning and lessons learned process.

In response to audience questions, LTC Fleet explained TOPFAS utilization, its successful use in exercise support, and the challenges faced while attempting to integrate TOPFAS into the OUP planning process. Colonel Crespo responded to comments regarding the JFC Naples Lessons Learned process for OUP, and he stated that while not heavily manned, support from JALLC support teams, as well as SHAPE and JWC, allowed for the lessons learned process to begin early in the operation. He expressed concern that without full support from the operational units, benefits would be minimized as those early lessons identified would not be properly captured and analyzed. The panel agreed that progress has been made, with Major Fogarty and Commander Carriglitto responding that both air and maritime coordination has achieved a high level of success.

Colonel Curtaz, panel moderator, thanked the panel members and summarized the panel discussions. He echoed the briefers that we have been slow in training to integrate the lessons learned process into the operations phase. Colonel Curtaz stressed those views of the panel members that lessons learned integration must come in the initial phases of planning and operations—and must be exercised at all levels of the chain of command.
LTC Del Hierro of HQ SACT began the briefings with an overview of Comprehensive Approach with a focus on Stabilization and Reconstruction (S&R). He emphasized the need for all NATO members to share Lessons Learned in the area of S&R. BG Ruivo then provided the panel introduction and outlined overall NATO strengths and weaknesses in Comprehensive Approach.

Mr. Jensen gave a presentation on comprehensive planning in Afghanistan and shared some examples as they applied to PRTs. Mr. Goodson discussed operationalizing COIN in Afghanistan. This included overall mandates, ends, means and the ways. He cited economic growth as the “hardest” area for development. The final briefing was given by CAPT Whitehouse from HQ ISAF CJMED. He provided an overall background on the health statistics of the Afghan population, the challenges of building medical transition and an overview of the Medical Lessons Learned analysis process.

The Comprehensive Approach theme initiated an insightful question and answer session regarding NGO’s and other non-NATO actors. CAPT Whitehouse explained that organizations such as Red Cross and other donor organizations are included in coordination meetings. Mr. Jensen emphasized that top level mandates need to be consistent regarding NGO’s. He also explained the importance of including their participation in planning courses when it is appropriate.

Mr. Goodson was asked what the main impediment is to why some Lessons Learned do not translate into other campaigns. He explained that continuity and information not getting to the right audience have the biggest impact to this.

BG Ruivo was asked his thoughts on how the issue of information security impacts the ability to get observations out in a timely manner. He acknowledged that it is an issue but there is a directed effort to expedite declassifying documents. BG Ruivo recognized that Lessons Learned are a “Need to know and a need to share.”

Mr. Jensen was asked why the military has been successful in comprehensive planning. Mr. Jensen replied that we “take everybody at the same level”. Stakeholders are brought in from the beginning so that their buy-in can be established from the start and Lessons Learned can be shared at the proper entry point.

BG Ruivo concluded the panel discussion with emphasis on some key points. We “need more commitment at all levels” in regards to Lessons Learned. A Comprehensive Approach is a unity of effort. We all need to be and see each other as committed partners.
Sharing Lessons in Counter-Piracy
Lessons in working with others towards a common goal

**Moderator:** Colonel Nick Lipscombe, JALLC

**Panel Members**
Commodore Steven Wolfe, JFC Lisbon
KMD Director

Commodore M.B. Hijmans, former Commander SNMG2/TF 508

LTC Przymanowski, JALLC Info Sharing Analyst

The Counter-Piracy panel discussed the circumstances and issues surrounding the pirate activity off the coast of Somalia. Commodore Wolfe opened the presentations with a summary of the situation as it stood: the behaviors of pirates, the limitations on Counter-Piracy forces and the challenges involved in NATO working together with a wide variety of actors. Commodore Hijmans followed with a description of the shift from a reactive stance to a proactive one; the impact of Operations KETTING and BEZEM on pirate operations and the changes to pirate TTPs in response. LTC Przymanowski then delivered a presentation on the excellent JALLC study into Counter-Piracy operations, the project factsheet for which is available from the JALLC website.

The discussion that followed covered many of the trickier points of Operation OCEAN SHIELD; especially achieving unity of effort without unity of command between the EU, CMF and NATO Counter-Piracy efforts, as well as independent deployers who do not even talk to NATO officially. This brought up issues of intelligence sharing, classifying for release, and the interaction of CIS equipment which regularly impact other NATO operations.

There was discussion of the importance of a Comprehensive Approach when dealing with a land-based problem under the restriction not to place boots on the ground and the tricky matter of cooperation with the EU: where NATO has yet to translate our good working relationship at the tactical level into the higher realms of politics. The matters of harsh responses and private security companies were also raised with the panel unable to see a way in which either could end well.
**Update from NATO HQ**

Ms Silvia Maretti, from the International Staff, Operations Division, shared with the audience the latest updates from NATO HQ in the domain of lessons learned.

She highlighted the work gone into the new version of the NATO Lessons Learned Policy and discussed ongoing efforts to create greater synchronicity within NATO HQ, tying the members of the NATO HQ LL Point of Contact network more closely together and allowing for greater tasking authority across this network to share lessons and implement remedial actions.

It is encouraging to see that the NATO LL Community can count on this support from the highest levels of NATO.

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**Conference Action Points – What will You Champion?**

The Conference has shown that NATO is making progress in developing a LL Capability and in turning LI into LL but we have also learned from our discussion panels that we are not there yet.

ACO Commands still face difficulty in capturing learning without outside assistance.

Operators have not yet fully become aware that they are vital members of the LL Community.

So where do we want to be this time next year? What are the action points for us and for you?

**Your Commitments**

NATO needs you to commit to:

- Championing **Learning** within your organization
- Championing individual issues you believe are important
- As an operator, engaging with your LL Staff to ensure your learning is captured and shared
- As a LL Practitioner, engaging with operators to ensure their learning is captured and shared and learned
- Getting your Leadership to drive the learning of lessons

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**Conference Statistics**

- **Total Attendance**: 271
  - Attendees from NATO: 121
  - Attendees from NATO National Bodies: 127
  - Attendees from PfP National Bodies: 18
  - Other Attendees (Australia, Industry): 5

**NATO Representation**

- NATO HQ: IS, IMS
- Agencies: NCSA, NSA
- NCS HQs: All
- NFS HQs: 7
- COEs: 12

**NATO National Representation**

- National MODs and Joint Staffs: 20
- National Commands/HQs: 45
- National Training/Doctrine/LL Centres: 26

**PfP National Representation**

- National MODs and Joint Staffs: 7
- National Commands/HQs: 6
- National Training/Doctrine/LL Centres: 5

A complete list of attendees with contact details is available on the Conference Site accessible from JALLC’s Internet homepage with your conference userID and password.

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**JALLC Commitments**

As we did last year, JALLC will push up the results of this conference to HQ SACT and NATO HQ to help inform further development of NATO’s LL Capability.

JALLC will continue to provide the tools, the Portal, the handbooks and even this conference.

JALLC will champion issues, like LLDb #529 and SEMARCIS, we think are important!
Acknowledgements

JALLC wishes to thank the following organizations and individuals for their support and assistance with this conference:

The Portuguese Army Military Academy for allowing us to use the facilities, and for their support in IT, catering, and admin during the conference itself.

The US Navy Reserve, which every year provides personnel to play a major role in the successful execution of the conference.

All the speakers and presenters—especially General Stolz—without whom there could be no conference.

LTCs Blake Nash, Ana Hajdic and Fernando Duarte from JALLC Production branch, the lead conference planners for this year’s conference, and the rest of my staff who assisted in its execution.

Finally, all the attendees for your engagement and enthusiasm in helping to make NATO into a successful learning organization.

Mark Your Calendars – NATO LL Conference 2012

The 2012 NATO LL Conference will be held in October 2012 in Lisbon. The exact dates will promulgate during the 2nd Quarter of 2012.

A preliminary goal for next year’s conference will again be to include more stakeholders and Operators and not just pure LL practitioners. As we learned at this year’s conference, Operators are the ones who need to learn a given lesson, not the LL staff, as well being the ones who must initially report and record their learning. Including them will allow them insight into their roles and responsibilities as members of the LL Community.

This year we made a concerted effort to focus the conference on Lessons from Operations, and indeed most of the panels were made up of Operators or Leaders. But even so the majority of attendees were LL Practitioners. In order to improve on this and be better able to get our vital message to the Operators that we are all vital members of the LL Community, next year we will strongly encourage Operators to attend. We plan to build on this year’s Update and Training Day, making into a LL Practitioners’ Day, open to a limited number of targeted LL Practitioners from NATO and Nations. The main part of the Conference will then once again be aimed at Operations. We ask our LL colleagues to spread this message among your HQs and organizations.

All conference materials, including all presentations, are available at JALLC’s conference site located on our unclassified Internet website at (note sign-in with conference userID and password is required):

https://www.jallc.nato.int/llconf2011/

NATO’s Lead Agent for Joint Analysis

The Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) is NATO’s centre for performing joint analysis of operations, training, exercises and Concept Development and Experimentation, including establishing and maintaining an interactive managed Lessons Learned Database.