CNA

SO YOU WANT TO SPONSOR A WARGAME …

Wargaming is an important tool that can help leaders make the right decisions. At CNA, we firmly believe that the cycle of research — which includes wargaming, analysis and exercises — is the best way to evaluate any dilemma faced by an organization. The right combination of these tools gives decision-makers confidence that they understand the risks, potential rewards, and universe of challenges extending from the decisions they must take.

In order to get the most out of your wargame, we would like you to consider your answers to the questions listed below. They will help us to understand your motivations for sponsoring a wargame with CNA, what you would like to get out of the wargame, and the limits within which we will need to operate. Finally, it will help us develop a common vocabulary about your wargame to ensure that we fully understand each other during the critical first steps of the wargame design process.

QUESTION #1

What is your organization's desired outcome as a result of the wargame? What do you want the wargame to enable your organization to do?

- **Socialize a concept.** Bring a group of players together to deliver to them a new concept, help them understand its implementation, and kick the tires a bit. Players gain a better understanding of the concept than they would by simply reading a concept paper.
- **Explore an idea.** Try to understand the nuances of a problem. Early "testing" of an idea to find out what pieces you might be missing, learn more about a concept or idea.
- **Refine a concept.** Within the concept development process, refine the concept through repeated wargames. Remove the bugs and sharpen the edges.
- **Model a process.** Not all models are computer-based. Some require people to make decisions. Manually model the steps involved in a decision cycle, collect data about how it works, and enable detailed analysis of the process.

- **Educate the players.** Bring players together to train them on an operational concept or idea. A training game where the outcome is a set of smarter players, though the sponsor is less likely to learn something new.

Choose one of the **outcomes** above to identify what your organization would like to accomplish. All wargames can do a little of each, but the design of the wargame hinges critically on which one is most important. If you must select more than one, please give them to us in a **prioritized list** so we can ensure the design focuses on the aspects that are most important to your organization.

An **outcome** is different from an **objective** (see Question 2). An outcome is about what you want the wargame to enable your organization to do, which may be different from the objective you want the players to pursue in the wargame. The objectives should work toward your organization's desired outcome. The two may even be the same, but not necessarily so.

QUESTION #2

What objective should players pursue in the wargame? What things do you want the players to produce during its execution? What do you want to have in hand at the game's conclusion?

We would like at least three — but no more than five — prioritized short statements about what you are hoping to achieve during the execution of the wargame project. (This can include additional analysis on the data collected during the wargame.) It should be consistent with the desired outcome. That is, a wargame designed with the outcome of "modeling a process" should not have a primary objective of "broad service-level awareness of an operating concept," because the two are contradictory. That objective would be more appropriate for a wargame with the desired outcome of "socializing a concept".

QUESTION #3

What constraints ("must do"), restraints ("can't do"), and conditions ("should do," boundaries) will limit the execution of the wargame?

There are always external factors that limit our wargames. These may evolve over time, but the earlier we can understand those limitations, the better. Some of them severely impact the kinds of wargames that we can execute. Your list should include things like minimum classification, required players, execution deadlines, supporting effort timelines, specific operational scenarios, expected Red team/adversary, available budget, etc. If there are certain players who must be in your wargame (your leadership, a specific target audience) be sure to include them here. Similarly, detail any areas of expertise you will need in your player base. Will the sponsor be able to provide or find appropriate players to fill those roles?

Once we get initial answers for these three questions, we can start creating the wargame design. If your leadership will be involved in answering these these questions, we request an opportunity to brief them on the wargame's development and planning. That will keep us from playing telephone and give us the quickest and best path to success.

For the next steps in the process, we'll speak with you frequently to get more details on your answers, provide you with our preliminary design to see if it meets your needs, and work with you to find and build the right wargame for your organization. That process will take some time. In an ideal world, we have 6 to 8 months of research and design prior to the execution of the wargame. But we will do our best to work within your requirements.

ABOUT CNA

CNA is a nonprofit research and analysis organization dedicated to the safety and security of the nation. It operates the Center for Naval Analyses — the only federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) serving the Department of the Navy — as well as the Institute for Public Research. CNA is dedicated to developing actionable solutions to complex problems of national importance. With nearly 700 scientists, analysts and professional staff, CNA takes a real-world approach to gathering data. Its one-of-a-kind Field Program places analysts on carriers and military bases, in squad rooms and crisis centers, working side-by-side with operators and decision-makers around the world. CNA supports naval operations, fleet readiness and great power competition. Its non-defense research portfolio includes criminal justice, homeland security and data management.

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