Addressee

Date

**BUSINESS CASE FOR ATTENDANCE AT CONNECTIONS UK CONFERENCE**

**ISSUE / REQUIREMENT.** The Connections UK conference[[1]](#footnote-1) is run by a team of volunteers who recognised that there was a requirement "to advance and preserve the art, science and application of wargaming" within Defence. The purpose of Connections UK is to bring professional wargame practitioners together to share and spread best practice. The conference hosts delegates from the military, Defence analysis, business, emergency services, humanitarian organisations, and academic wargaming communities. These include many international delegates. This same community supports efforts to reinvigorate wargaming across Defence. Recent changes to priorities and constraints on budgets have led to increase emphasis on the “What” and “Why” elements of training, rather than merely the “How” offered by sophisticated computer technology. This is most obviously typified by the US Deputy Sec Def Memo to the Joint Chiefs on Wargaming and Innovation[[2]](#footnote-2), and the Defence Wargaming Handbook[[3]](#footnote-3). The Connections UK event is the most important international conference for wargaming in the year and was identified as one of the more important forums in a letter to VCDS by DSTL. Attendance will ensure that our organisation continues to be recognised as an important stakeholder in the field of Defence education, experimentation, analysis, force development, simulation and training.

**RECOMMENDATION.** Approve the attendance at the Connections UK 2023 Conference held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from 05 to 07 September 2023 at a total cost of £**.**

**COSTS & DURATION OPTIONS.** The most appropriate options are as follows:

**Option A: Duration** (Travel Option).

Conference Fee: £

Hire Car to Airport: £

Subsistence: £

Accommodation: £   
Air Travel: £

**Total: £**

**Option B: Duration** (Travel Option).

Conference Fee: £

Hire Car to Airport: £

Subsistence: £

Accommodation: £   
Car Hire: £

Air Travel: £

**Total: £**

**Recommendation: Authorise Option Travel at a total cost of £.**

**TIMING.** Routine. But providing authorisation early will provide savings in flight and accommodation options, where costs normally increase considerably nearer the event.

**BENEFITS.** Attending the Connections UK professional wargaming conference will provide numerous benefits in the following areas:

1. **Professional Development**: Attending the conference can provide opportunities for professionals to enhance their skills and knowledge in the field of wargaming. The conference provides a platform for attendees to interact with experts, share their experiences, and learn from one another. Additionally, attendees can gain exposure to new ideas and best practices, which can help them advance their careers and improve their performance in their current roles.
2. **Value for Money**: Investing in attending the conference can be considered as a wise investment in one's professional development. The conference offers a cost-effective way to access high-quality training and education, network with industry professionals, and gain insights into the latest developments in the field. Furthermore, attendees can access valuable resources and tools, which can help them improve their decision-making processes and better understand the challenges they face in their day-to-day work.
3. **International Cooperation**: The conference provides a unique opportunity for professionals from different countries to collaborate and share their perspectives on international security challenges. This can foster better understanding and cooperation between nations, leading to improved outcomes in addressing global security threats.
4. **Threat from Russia**: As the conference is focused on wargaming and military strategy, attendees will have the opportunity to engage in discussions about the threat from Russia and other security challenges. This can help attendees better understand the nature of the threat and develop strategies for mitigating it.
5. **Understanding Influence-based Warfare**: In today's complex and dynamic security environment, understanding influence-based warfare is increasingly important. Attendees at the conference can gain insights into how non-kinetic effects, such as propaganda, cyber operations, and psychological operations, are used in modern conflict. This knowledge can help professionals develop more effective strategies for defending against these types of attacks. This is directly linked to the UK Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre Handbook on ‘Influence Wargaming’, due to be published shortly, and a number of contributing authors will be present at the conference.

In conclusion, by participating in the conference, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges we face in our day-to-day work and develop strategies for addressing them more effectively.

**IMPACT OF NOT PROCEEDING**. Nations who take warfare seriously wargame. China restarted a comprehensive wargaming initiative in 2008[[4]](#footnote-4). In 2017 Russian reopened their Wargames Centre in the Academy of the General Staff of the Russian Armed forces[[5]](#footnote-5). The professional wargaming community in Defence is dwarfed by the recreational wargaming community in general, making identification of appropriate tools, techniques and procedures for professional purposes difficult. Failure to attend will adversely affect our standing with allies and against competitors, make use of this powerful and cost-effective tool hard to achieve, and will adversely affect the credibility of this organisation in this rapidly developing area.

**BUDGET**. Mention if the costs are included within the Budget projection for the Financial Year.

**SUBMITTED BY.**

**AUTHORISED BY.**

1. Connections UK: www.professionalwargaming.co.uk [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. DEPSECDEF Memo: https://www.govexec.com/media/gbc/docs/pdfs\_edit/work-wargaming-memo-9feb15.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Defence Wargaming Handbook: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-wargaming-handbook [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 'Wargaming with the PLA', Dr D. Elllis: http://www.professionalwargaming.co.uk/2016WargamingwiththePLA.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 'How Russia Plays at War', Dr S. Main, British Army Review 171, p.53. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)