JALLC PROJECT FACTSHEET

Knowledge Enterprise: Implementing Knowledge Management as an Enterprise Function in ACO

Project Overview

Knowledge Management (KM) is central to Allied Command Operations' (ACO) mission to prepare for, plan, and conduct military operations to meet NATO's political objectives. KM serves to safeguard against the loss of knowledge, which is especially important in a context where one third of ACO military staff rotate out of their positions every year. KM also supports the creation and acquisition of the knowledge ACO needs to meet current and emergent security challenges.

The Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) was tasked to assess the extent to which KM processes and activities are implemented at ACO's strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The report's findings are based on a representative survey of ACO staff and on a case study of SHAPE's Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre.

Defining Knowledge Management

Various definitions of what KM actually entails exist within NATO as well as elsewhere. In the JALLC's report, the project team have defined KM as: a staff-wide enterprise function—a function regarding the management of all information, expertise, insights, and best practices across the staff with the objective of ACO becoming knowledge-centric. As stated in the report, within ACO, there is currently no agreed definition of KM processes and activities. In order to evaluate the conduct of KM across ACO, the project team therefore developed a list of six KM processes, together with the associated activities. A survey for ACO staff members was developed and conducted on the basis of those KM processes and activities, which are described in brief in this factsheet.

> "Knowledge Management supports the creation and acquisition of the knowledge ACO needs to meet current and emergent security challenges."

Processes and Activities

Learning Knowledge

The learning process is about helping new ACO staff members gain a better understanding of their work environment and the position they are to fill. Survey results revealed that the biggest potentials for improvement in this area lie in supporting new ACO staff members to learn about their functions, roles, and responsibilities through systematic Hand-Over-Take-Overs, the mentoring of newly arrived staff members, and improvements in induction training.

Raise Staff Awareness

The process of raising staff awareness comprises activities relating to improved awareness of the relevant Command Group's intent, as well as of new NATO policies, initiatives, and directives. In this respect, the survey results indicated that the majority of ACO staff members feel sufficiently informed regarding NATO's and their HQ's strategic direction.

Processes and Activities (continued)

Identify and capture staff knowledge

This process is about the identification and capture of the knowledge of individual staff members in order to make it usable by ACO. Research conducted by the project team revealed that there is room for improvement in capturing the knowledge of departing ACO staff members through systematic exit interviews and reports.

Create and share knowledge

Knowledge creation is about the formation of new knowledge in the minds of staff members; the process of knowledge-sharing revolves around staff members making their knowledge accessible to others by interacting with them. The analysis conducted by the project team revealed that there is potential in ACO to increase the use of creative techniques in this respect, such as brainstorming, and to enhance internal review mechanisms as well as Command Group feedback on staff work.

Use outside knowledge

The use of outside knowledge is a process whereby staff members systematically exploit knowledge from outside their daily routines or from outside the organization as a whole. This type of knowledge can be found in external publications, Lessons Learned databases, and reports from major battle staff events and exercises. The ACO-wide survey results revealed that more could be done in terms of ACO staff's use of outside knowledge.

Organize and store information and explicit knowledge

Information and explicit knowledge denotes items which are stored on repositories such as databases, portals, or platforms in order to serve as organizational memory. This process requires information on work-related content or other staff members being organized and stored on information and knowledge bases in order to make it retrievable for staff. The survey results show that a majority of ACO staff feel it is easy to find information and/or subject matter experts within NATO.

Improvements to Knowledge Management

The report provides recommendations on how tangible improvements in these processes and activities might be achieved through the development of a new NATO Information and Knowledge Management Policy, an ACO-wide directive on KM, a training programme on KM for ACO staff, and the inclusion of a feedback option in the next version of the Tasker Tracker Enterprise.

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