

SOF Hive Minds Network – Calling Notice

We, Col. Edward Hayward (UK MOD), Dr. Ben Zweibelson (Lancaster University) and Dr. Philippe Beaulieu-B. (Canadian Forces College & Archipelago of Design), invite participants to join SOF Hive Minds, a new **closed working group** hosted by the Archipelago of Design (AOD). This group seeks to formalize a network working collaboratively on shared issues within the SOF ecosystem. The goal is to generate insights that will primarily benefit the SOF enterprise as a whole, but also the respective organisation of participants.

Background

The SOF Hive Minds concept aims at uniting our efforts in addressing shared challenges especially across the Five Eyes, but also across the NATO members & partners community by mobilizing conceptual innovation methodologies and harnessing professional wisdom. Through the creation of working groups, we hope to achieve **cognitive ‘leaps’** that will accelerate organizational change and save significant resources in the long run. The aim is to formalize an independent community of practice that would augment, not compete with, the more structured G1-9 system and our Commands. Overall, by combining our unique position and experiences, we will become an accelerant to finding game changing approaches to shared challenges.

Approach

This calling notice is to recruit a small initial working group of not more than 20 members including mostly SOF practitioners and to seek areas of interest for an initial virtual meeting in February-March 2021. Projects should aim to provide tangible outputs/recommendations/learning points for participants to feed back into their respective organisations.

Eligibility Criteria

- a) Staff or Command experience as a SOF practitioner will be prioritised, but we also encourage a diverse participation with a connection to the SOF enterprise.
- b) High level of motivation to commit to working group meetings and projects
- c) Familiarity with reflexive approaches such as design, system thinking and foresight.
- d) Willingness to ground the agenda on SOF excellence above organizational or self-interests.

Requirement presented as a one-two pagers

- a) provide a short bio/background
- b) motivation statement to become a group member
- c) outline your expectations and desired outcomes from the group
- d) share 1-2 complex challenges or opportunity the SOF community should address or seize
- d) offer a short description of each of these including why they are a challenge/opportunity

f) preferred date and time to host the launch meeting in February or March 2021.

While we aim to generate working group clusters in a bottom up way from your submission, you can use these meta-clusters as a guide.

- SOF Environment & Threats (e.g. What is winning?).
- Strategy (e.g. Power, Competition and Smart Forces).
- SOF Mind (e.g. The suitability of Systemic Thinking processes for designing SOF activities).
- SOF Operator (e.g. The suitability of conventional military education for SOF operators).

Please send this information to our coordinator: coordinator@aodnetwork.ca by Jan. 17th, 2021

Process, Structure and Deliverables

A month prior to the inaugural symposium, our coordinator will issue a programme with participants assigned to key challenge/opportunity clusters. Participants will submit short draft think pieces no later than 1 week prior the event to enrich the discussion. We hope to turn these into a special issue of the *Special Operations Journal*. We will also explore more deliverable possibilities with the group. The inaugural symposium will also be virtual. As we move to a post-COVID context, the group will decide whether they want to move to an online, blended or live symposium format.

Platform & Security

The format will be unclassified discussion with Chatham House Rules to allow a wider range of participants including a limited number of academics. Chatham House Rules means that each participant is obliged to keep the content of discussions and the identity of participants to themselves. As we expect a more conceptual than a factual conversation, the unclassified format should not hinder quality. We will conduct the first meeting on Zoom now equipped with advanced encryption.

Administration: Col. Edward Hayward and Dr. Ben Zweibelson will co-direct the SOF Hive Minds working group with support from Dr. Philippe Beaulieu-B. This network is hosted and supported by the [Archipelago of Design \(AOD\)](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to developing reflexive military leadership, emboldened by innovation methodologies. This organizational arrangement ensures independence over the network's agenda, ideas and activities. This non-profit organization, including the staff, website and platform supporting the SOF Hive MINDS network, is funded by the Canadian Department of National Defence's Mobilizing Insights for Defence and Security (MINDS) programme.

Sincerely,

Col. Edward Hayward
Dr. Ben Zweibelson
Dr. Philippe Beaulieu-B.