

NATO Allied Command Transformation Operational Experimentation



2020 Fact Sheet – Information Environment Assessment (IEA)

Background:

The information environment provides a novel landscape for information manoeuvres and communication activity that is conducive to information conflict, deception, and influence operations. In response to the growing importance of information environment assessments, NATO International Military Staff tasked the two Strategic Commands to develop and implement an IEA capability to enable NATO decision-makers and planners to understand adversarial, as well as friendly, activities and intentions in the information environment. This capability will support coherent and successful strategic communication (StratCom) and related activities contributing to the achievement of Alliance Deterrence and Defence, Projecting Stability, and warfighting objectives.

IEA will help identify misinformation and hostile narratives and help to spot early warning signs of potential hybrid actions. Additionally, IEA will focus on assessing the effectiveness of NATO's own communication activities in the information environment. Ultimately, IEA allows NATO to be more effective in both responding to disinformation and developing proactive communications strategies. In 2018, OPEX executed a series of experiments to support the development of the IEA capability. Last year's experiment results are shaping IEA activities for 2019. This year, ACT capability developers are on track for an IEA initial operating capability by June 2019. As capability development continues, OPEX will support with a nearly yearlong 'field experiment' focused on technology enablers for the delivery of the IEA capability.

Mission:

OPEX branch is integral to IEA capability development as it reaches initial operating capability in 2019 and final operating capability in 2022.

Milestones:

Feb 2018 Global4Sight 'Field' Experiment Final Report
Mar 2018 Assessment of Adversarial Communications Experiment Final Report
Aug 2018 Assessment of NATO-own Communication Experiment Final Report
Jan 2019 IEA Validation Experiment Exercise Trident Juncture Experiment Report
Jun 2019 IEA Initial Operational Capability Declared
2020 IEA 'Field Experiment' with Technology Enablers

Headquarters:

NATO Allied Command Transformation
Joint Force Development Directorate
Operational Experimentation Branch

OPEX:

OPEX is the intersection between Operators and Innovation. OPEX plans, designs, conducts, and analyses experiments in support of new concepts and capabilities development. Visit www.act.nato.int/opex-pressroom for more information, or visit us online at the CDE365 Website located on [NATO's Transformation Network](#).

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NATO HQ STRATCOM: The IEA experiment aligns under the 2020 NATO Communications Strategy pillar of *NATO Protects*.

NATO ACT STRATCOM: The IEA experiment contributes to SACT's 2020 Objective #1 - *Support NATO's operations, increase interoperability, and readiness*, Objective #2 - *Mitigate the risk of strategic surprise*, and Objective #3 - *Preserve the edge of NATO's military instrument of power over our potential adversary*.

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February 2020

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