

How to Define the Aims and Objectives of a Simulation Exercise

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Training Workshop on Emergency Management and Disaster Response

How to Conduct Simulation Exercise (Sim-Ex)

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Aims VS Objectives

Aim (Purpose)

A broad and comprehensive statement describing the **overall intent** or ultimate outcome to be achieved.

"Where we want to go"

Objectives

Specific, measurable, and time-bound statements identifying **concrete steps** to achieve the aim.

"How will we get there"

VS

Why Defining Aims & Objectives Matters



Foundation

Forms the foundation of the entire simulation exercise.



Guide

Guides planning, scenario development, participant selection, and evaluation.



Focus

Ensures the exercise remains focused on priority capabilities.



Measurement

Provides measurable criteria to assess whether the exercise was successful.

Approach for Defining the Aim

01



Assess the Need

Identify gaps or issues to be tested.



02



Review Documents

Study contingency plans and After-Action Reviews.



03



Consult Stakeholders

Get comprehensive perspectives on challenges.



04



Draft and Revise

Draft aim and revise for clarity and acceptance.

Steps for Defining Objectives

1

Review the Aim

Start by thoroughly understanding the main aim of the exercise.

2

Brainstorm

The planning team and stakeholders brainstorm together about concrete outcomes necessary to achieve the aim.

3

Draft Objectives

Write draft objectives using SMART principles and action verbs that indicate observable actions.

4

Prioritize

If there are many objectives, prioritize and select only the most important ones (typically 4-6 items).

5

Review and Revise

SMART Principles for Writing Objectives

S	Specific	Clearly state who will do what and how.
M	Measurable	Have criteria to measure achievement.
A	Achievable	Challenging but possible within constraints.
R	Relevant	Consistent with and support the main aim.
T	Time-focused	Clear time frame for completion.

The Planning Process: Steps 1-3

1

Assess Need

Identify capability gaps, review past performance, and define broad Purpose.



2

Establish Team

Form a Planning Team with representatives from all relevant agencies.



3

Define Objectives

Break down the aim into specific SMART objectives (typically 4-6 items).

The Planning Process: Steps 5-6

05 Develop Scenario

Activities

Create a challenging and realistic story or scenario consistent with the previously defined aim, objectives, and scope.

Output:

Scenario Document with event details and timeline.

06 Select Exercise Format

Activities

Decide on the most appropriate format (Tabletop, Drill, Functional, or Full-scale) considering objectives, resources, and readiness.

Output:

Decision on the most appropriate exercise format.

Linking Objectives to Capabilities & Scenario



Define objectives **before** the scenario is developed. Objectives determine how complex the scenario should be.



Validate operational decision-making.



Test inter-agency communication pathways.



Practise field-level response procedures.



Assess resource mobilisation processes.

Summary



Defining clear and concise aims and objectives is one of the **most critical factors** in determining the success of a simulation exercise.



The aim serves as a **compass** setting the overall direction.



Objectives based on SMART principles determine concrete steps and serve as **criteria for measuring success**.



Ensures that invested resources are used cost-effectively and lead to **genuine organizational capability development**.

Thank You

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