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Change Management and the Realignment of the Service Battalion and Base Technical Services

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JCSP 48

Service Paper

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**Change Management and the Realignment of the
Service Battalion and Base Technical Services**

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ONCE MORE, WITH FEELING! CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND THE REALIGNMENT OF THE SERVICE BATTALION AND BASE TECHNICAL SERVICES

AIM

1. The aim of this service paper is to analyze the Canadian Army's (CA) proposed trial to realign the Authorities, Responsibilities and Accountabilities (ARA) of the Service Battalion (Svc Bn) and the Base Technical Services (B Tech Svcs). It will review the historic structure of the Svc Bn, examine the problem that this new realignment is meant to solve within the Canadian Army Modernization Strategy (CAMS) effort, discuss potential challenges to implementation, and consider change management processes that may support this initiative. The recommendations will include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enable CA leadership to assess the success of this trial.

INTRODUCTION

2. The CA has long struggled with how to optimize the employment of its limited Combat Service Support (CSS)¹ personnel to meet both operational (eg. brigade units in the field) and institutional (eg. base lodger units) support mandates. Most units have some integral – or 1st line – CSS capability. Major CA bases that house Canadian Mechanized Brigade Groups (CMBGs) also have a Svc Bn mandated to provide 2nd line support such as replenishment of 1st line stores or provision of major maintenance work.² Svc Bn also supports base lodger units.³ All units on the base – both CMBG and lodger units – look to the Svc Bn to provide institutional services.⁴ Svc Bn also force generates (FG) CSS personnel for deployments. Given Svc Bn's multiple priorities, institutional support tasks typically suffer for the more urgent operational tasks. The goal of the trial is to reassign some of the Svc Bn's institutional ARAs to B Tech Svcs. This restructure would enable Svc Bn to focus on FG of deployment-ready CSS soldiers to ensure the CA is able to thrive in Adaptive Dispersed Operations (ADO), as envisioned in Close Engagement.⁵ An expansion of B Techs Svcs' mandate could ensure that critical institutional support tasks are maintained at the required level regardless of the operational tempo of the CMBG.

¹ CSS refers to administration, logistics, and maintenance functions. *B-GL-345-001/FP-001 CSS Units in Operations*, 2013, GL1-2.

² Refer to *B-GL-345-001/FP-001 CSS Units in Operations* for a more fulsome discussion of the lines of support for CMBG units. The same doctrinal principles for CSS in operations will continue to apply, regardless of changes to the Svc Bn institutional ARAs.

³ This may include the Fire Hall, Roads and Grounds, Range Control, and helicopter squadrons; these units are fundamental to the CMBG units' ability to train safely and effectively, but will not deploy as part of a CA battle group (BG). Many of these units require both 1st and 2nd line support, which are currently provided by the Svc Bn.

⁴ Institutional support might include Ammunition, Clothing Stores, Contracting, Refueling, and Vehicle Recovery.

⁵ Note that while civilian employees will also be affected by this restructure, the discussion focuses on CAF members, as civilian employees already fill institutional roles. CA G4 Plans, *Trial Directive – Canadian Army Combat Service Support Structures and ARA Alignment (DRAFT)*, December 2021, 2-3/15.

3. The ARA realignment is being examined by CA leadership at this time for two reasons. First, this realignment is part of the Canadian Army Modernization Strategy (CAMS), specifically *Line of Effort (LOE) 1.1: Adapted Managed Readiness Plan*, and *LOE 4.1: Force 2025*. These LOEs seek to modernize the CA structure in anticipation of deployed ADO. Second, this effort forms part of a CAF-wide effort to “create cohesive logistics capability” as directed in the CAF Reconstitution Directive.⁶ This change would create a clearer technical CSS accountability structure, in line with the efforts to modernize sustainment identified in response to the Auditor General’s Spring 2020 Report on supplying the CAF.⁷ The concept of separating institutional and operational support tasks, however, is not new, nor is it simple. Before addressing how to re-balance Svc Bn and B Tech Svcs ARAs, there is much to be learned from previous structures. A summary of Svc Bn history will be presented, which inform the discussion on how this change may be implemented most effectively.

DISCUSSION

Historic context

4. Significant reorganizations of CA CSS units took place in 1995, 2005 and 2013 (Fig 1). In 1995, after years of inefficiency and force generation (FG) challenges, the CA took advantage of the wider post-Cold War restructuring to split the existing Svc Bn in two parts.⁸ One part formed a Close Support (CS) Svc Bn to support the CMBG in the field and on operations, and the other formed a General Support (GS) Svc Bn to support base and area dependencies under the newly created Area Support Group (ASG).⁹ The GS Svc Bn could potentially be augmented to create a deployable support bde, called the Canadian Support Group (CSG).¹⁰ Unfortunately, the GS Svc Bn was not adequately resourced with personnel and materiel, and several key replenishment accounts and processes became dormant and were subsequently lost.¹¹ As a result, the potential benefits of the “CS / GS / CSG” structure were never fully realized.

5. The CS and GS Svc Bns were amalgamated in 2005, with the composite Svc Bn once again being responsible for both field and base support requirements, as well as FG for the Afghanistan mission. At the same time, person years (PYs) were transferred from Svc Bn to other CMBG units, justified by the efficiencies found by creating the composite Svc Bn. These PYs were primarily converted into much needed (at the time) combat arms positions, and also expanded units’ integral CSS capabilities.¹² This move was driven in part to more efficiently manage the tempo and operational demands of the deployment cycles.

⁶ CA G4, Position Paper for DLFD, *Force 2025 Sustainment – COS A Sustainment Reqt*, 8 Aug 21, 4/5.

⁷ Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PACP), *Spring 2020 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada: Report 3 - Supplying the Canadian Armed Forces*, 19 Nov 20, 19.

⁸ Osons Solutions. “Section 3 – Chronology.” *Army Dependency Study: A Review of 2 (Force Generation) Service Battalion’s Ability to Support Dependencies Base On The 2013 Build Model*, 10 August 2010, 11.

⁹ Osons, *Army Dependency* ..., 15.

¹⁰ Osons, *Army Dependency* ..., 13.

¹¹ Osons, *Army Dependency* ..., 16-19.

¹² Osons, *Army Dependency* ..., 20-21.

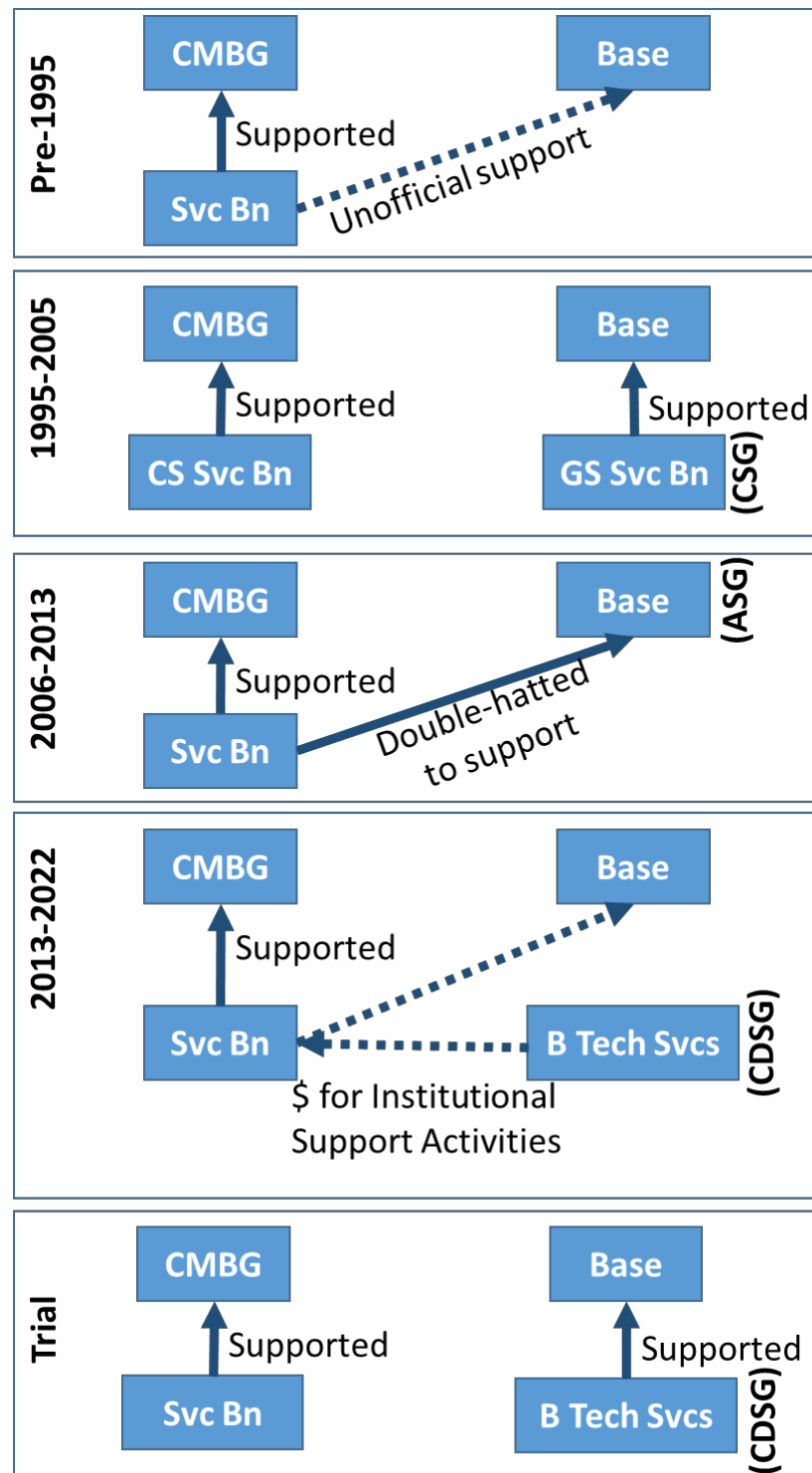


Figure 1: Simplified diagram of reorganizations of Svc Bn (1995-2022)

Source: Created by author based on Osons Solutions *Army Dependency Study* 2010.

6. The most recent change occurred under the CA's Force 2013 plan. ASGs were reorganized into Canadian Divisional Support Groups (CDSGs), and B Tech Svcs was created.¹³ Due in part to the need for CSS soldiers to maintain both technical and field skills, as well as the vast geographic area covered by each CDSG, it was agreed that Svc Bns would continue to provide both operational and institutional support on their respective bases (Edmonton, Petawawa, and Valcartier).¹⁴ This decision was also influenced by the Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP) that was underway.¹⁵ B Tech Svcs, meanwhile, would support smaller organizations across the CDSG, as well as fund Svc Bn's institutional support activities. This is the current arrangement between Svc Bn and B Tech Svcs.¹⁶

7. Several studies and other attempts to update the structure of the Svc Bn have taken place since 2013, but none yielded any tangible results.¹⁷ Importantly, a review of the Service Levels Analysis (SLA) of institutional support activities has not been completed in decades, despite the ASG MID directing it be undertaken in 2013.¹⁸ The very few results yielded from the attempted 2013 SLA were incorporated into the Departmental Results Framework (DRF) as *Indicator 6.9 - Land Bases*.¹⁹ The most recent available Departmental Results Report from 2019/2020, however, shows that targets had yet to be identified, let alone achieved.²⁰ This lack of data means that the responsibilities being transferred from Svc Bn to B Tech Svcs are not clearly defined, complicating efforts to assign PYs to those tasks.

8. The previous Svc Bn restructuring efforts were driven by a number of factors, including the end of the Cold War, the high-tempo Afghanistan era, the CA's broader Force 2013 Transformation, and deficit reduction. The current proposal is driven by the CA's need to modernize to be able to face high-tech, near peer adversaries in ADO, as well as the imperative to reform the sustainment enterprise. The assumptions and considerations of these earlier efforts must be re-examined through a contemporary lens. The logic behind Svc Bn focusing on the *combat* facet of CSS is sound, however there are many obstacles to its successful implementation. What challenges are facing the CA and the CSS community today that may impede this realignment?

¹³ Commander Canadian Army (CCA), *ASG Transformation – Master Implementation Directive (MID) Amendments*, 17 May 2013, D-3/7.

¹⁴ CCA, *ASG Transformation*, ..., D-3/7.

¹⁵ CA G4, Position Paper, ..., 1/5.

¹⁶ Note that due to the unique geography and units of each division, there are minor variations between the exact structure and service agreements between the Svc Bn and B Tech Svcs specific to each CDSG.

¹⁷ CA G4, Position Paper, ..., 2/5.

¹⁸ The last comprehensive establishment and productivity review, the On Site Management Evaluation Review (OSMER), appears to have taken place before 1995. Osons, *Army Dependency*..., 4-5; CA G4, Position Paper ..., 2/5.

¹⁹ CA G4, Position Paper, ..., 2/5.

²⁰ Department of National Defence, *Department of National Defence and The Canadian Armed Forces 2019-2020 Departmental Results Reports*, 2020, 72.

Challenges

9. CAF Reconstitution. The CAF is short 10,000 personnel across all trades and ranks.²¹ The Svc Bn is certainly experiencing the ‘hollow middle’ identified by the CDS in 2021, with many Sr NCO positions left vacant.²² While it may be relatively simple to match positions against the ARAs that will transfer to B Tech Svcs, the more complex issue will be determining which positions are actually filled and which are left vacant. If B Tech Svcs is left under-resourced, the trial risks failing in much the same way that the CS / GS configuration did. If Svc Bn is under-resourced, its ability to FG CSS soldiers will be jeopardized. Ultimately, it will not be possible to define the risk that commanders are being asked to assume without a clear understanding of the necessary Service Levels and associated PYs.

10. Land Duty Allowance (LDA). Svc Bn members currently receive monthly LDA,²³ while B Tech Svcs mbrs do not. This is due to the expectation that Svc Bn soldiers are at a higher readiness state, and regularly spend time in the field or work extended hours.²⁴ On paper, moving an institutional position to B Tech Svcs is simple and logical. In practice, it has the potential to be a major dissatisfier. For instance, for a soldier currently working in Clothing Stores, the only tangible result of a move to B Tech Svcs that they might perceive, is that they would be paid less to do the same job. The potential financial impact on unit members may create an unfavorable disposition toward a posting to the unit, or lead to only posting in members who were medically unfit from receiving LDA, such that the unit is perceived as a “dumping ground.” While these may not be reasons *not* to proceed with the realignment, they must be considered deliberately – but delicately.

11. Infrastructure. Untangling institutional roles out of Svc Bn infrastructure is an interesting problem. For many services, such as stand-alone buildings like the Base Fuel Pumps or the Ammunition Compound, it is simple. For others, such as Maintenance, there may be no choice but to continue to work on the same shop floor for several years, until infrastructure projects catch up. In the meantime, this challenge may manifest in two ways: interpersonal and procedural. The interpersonal aspect refers to the potential for the frustration of working alongside other technicians who may be perceived as being held to a different standard.²⁵ Regardless of the logic, it may still feel unfair to individuals involved. The procedural aspect refers to the requirement to change workflows, and the potential requirement to create positions to manage those workflows.

12. Cynicism. Older members of the CSS community have lived through two significant transformations in the past 16 years. The CA has been operating at a high

²¹ LGen W.D. Eyre, CDS, *Planning Directive for Canadian Armed Forces Reconstitution*, Planning Directive, Ottawa: Chief of Defence Staff, 2021, 5.

²² Author’s experience in 2 Svc Bn between 2019-2021; this was felt acutely when trying to FG CSS Sr NCOs for two rotations of three distinct deployments in 2020-21.

²³ LDA is withheld if a member is medically unfit for the field for an extended period of time.

²⁴ This applies to Svc Bn soldiers even if they are filling institutional support jobs that would not deploy to the field. CBI 205.33-335 – Land Duty Allowance (Monthly and Casual)

²⁵ This may include different work hours or leave plans; CMBG units are typically granted more Short Leave than institutional units.

tempo for several years. This tempo, combined with chronic vacancies in leadership positions, can create the conditions for members to feel burnt out and cynical about the sincerity of leadership to genuinely care about soldiers' well-being. This in turn may lead to apathy toward the proposed change, and a jaded belief that it is simply an effort to score someone points toward a promotion. As above, these are not reasons *not* to proceed. However, the human terrain of this initiative will be essential to its success. This leads to an important discussion about how CA leadership apply change management principles to these challenges to enable this trial's success.

Change Management

13. Militaries are not widely known for practicing progressive change management principles, generally leaving these techniques in the domain of private industry. This is due largely to the hierarchical nature of the military; a commander gives an order, and it is executed. This initiative is different for several reasons. First, leaders are typically employed in positions for two years; this initiative will take longer than that to be fully realized. Second, it is a complex change; it will require significant staff effort over several years to collect and analyze the data, complete the associated establishment changes, and update all systems of record. Finally, this has a lengthy history of change, as well as neglected attempts to change; these experiences must be carefully and deliberately reviewed to inform the trial's way ahead.

14. There are several models of change management. Dr Golden's model presented in Figure 2 emphasizes the importance of setting the groundwork before executing a change. Of particular note is the need to identify measurable goals, as well as to identify change leaders at all levels throughout the organization.²⁶ Once the change is underway, it is important to clearly communicate *why* it is needed, while demonstrating the benefits to team members. This model also highlights the need to monitor and reevaluate the change, and fine tune as required. All of these principles could be applied to this trial without delaying or undermining it. Ensuring that the entire team is supportive of a change plays an important role in its long term success.

²⁶ Change leaders must not simply default to managers; managers have multiple priorities, and move more often than workers. Giving more junior members an important role in this initiative will enable leadership to learn of ground-level challenges more quickly, and help foster a sense of ownership of the solution.

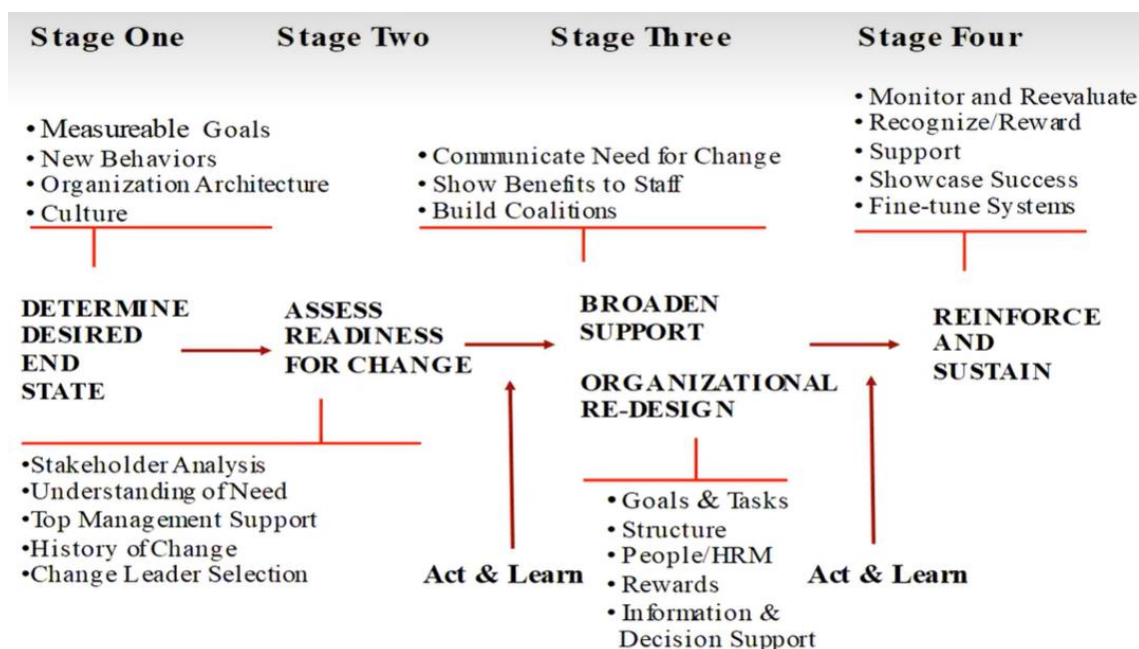


Figure 2: Dr Brian R. Golden Model of Transforming Organizations

Source: Dr Golden lecture to JCSP 48, *Change Management in Complex Organizations*.

15. There is significant research on why change initiatives fail. One study showed that change suffers a failure rate as high as 70%, with the cause often being resistance by employees and middle managers.²⁷ These statistics underscore the importance of looking beyond the PYs and organizational charts, and considering the human element of change. The individuals that will form the newly expanded B Tech Svcs will remain there beyond the tenure of current leadership teams, and will ultimately determine the longevity of the trial. It is natural for people to emotionally respond to change, and engaging in clear and honest communication about goals and concerns can mitigate resistance to change.²⁸ Being able to define the change – specifically, the activities and associated PY – is a good place to begin.

Key Performance Indicators

16. The larger effort to conduct a full SLA will take time to complete, and will not be available before the trial begins. It is possible, however, to begin collecting data immediately under local initiative to quantify the services provided. This is important for two reasons. First, it will make it possible to baseline what and how services are currently provided. Next, it allows leadership to start collecting the data that will eventually feed into the SLA, which will make it possible to define meaningful DRF Indicator targets. When considering what data to collect, and through what methods, it is helpful to turn to private industry practices for defining KPIs.

²⁷ Thomas Lauer, *Change Management Fundamentals and Success Factors*. 1st ed. 2021. ed. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2021, 45.

²⁸ Lauer, *Change Management...*, 49-51.

17. KPIs are valuable for monitoring performance over time.²⁹ It is important to select KPIs that will actually provide the desired information. It is also important to be judicious in how many KPIs are created, due to the labour that may be involved with collecting and analyzing data.³⁰ An effective KPI should be clearly tied to a strategy, and fed by good data.³¹ A sample KPI template is available in Annex A. For the purpose of the trial, it would be valuable to identify potential technical and personnel metrics that could be collected from each of the Svc Bn companies (Supply, Transport, Maintenance, and Administration) as a start state.

CONCLUSION

18. The CA's proposed trial to realign the ARAs of Svc Bn and B Tech Svcs is intended to enable the FG of deployment-ready CSS soldiers to support a modern Army conducting ADO. At the same time, expanding B Tech Svcs ARAs may support the modernization of the CA sustainment enterprise. A similar restructure was implemented between 1995-2005, and there are valuable lessons to apply to the current initiative. The rationale behind the change is different from previous iterations, however, and CA leadership should carefully consider the potential effects of CAF Reconstitution, LDA, infrastructure, and cynicism on this effort. Applying change management principles may help mitigate these challenges, while careful selection of KPIs will enable leadership to clearly define what success of the trial will look like.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The following recommendations are made to help ensure the success of the ARA realignment trial:

- a. Complete a detailed review of the CS / GS Svc Bn construct to understand what did and did not work in practice. Apply these lessons to Svc Bn / B Tech Svcs structure.
- b. Develop a change management plan to address personnel concerns associated with this transformation, to include:
 - i. CAF Reconstitution and personnel shortages; the potential shortages must be more clearly defined before they can be mitigated.
 - ii. Potential loss of LDA; this may be mitigated by acknowledging the concerns and emphasizing benefits (predictable hours and lower readiness requirements.)
 - iii. Infrastructure needs; this may be mitigated by engaging members directly to develop solutions to sharing space.

²⁹ Bernard Marr, *Key Performance Indicators for Dummies*, Chichester, England: For Dummies, 2015b, 11.

³⁰ Marr, *For Dummies...*, 13.

³¹ Bernard Marr, *How to Develop Effective KPIs*, Accessed 16 January 2022, <https://bernardmarr.com/how-to-develop-effective-kpis/>.

- iv. Cynicism; member reluctance to support the change may affect its long term success. Clear and honest communication with members to hear concerns and suggestions may help create a sense of ownership in the new structure and reinforce its success.
- c. Create effective KPIs and start collecting data immediately. This will enable leadership to assess the trial's effectiveness, and contribute to the larger SLA effort under the DRF. Annex B provides detailed suggestions.

Annex A – Sample KPI Template

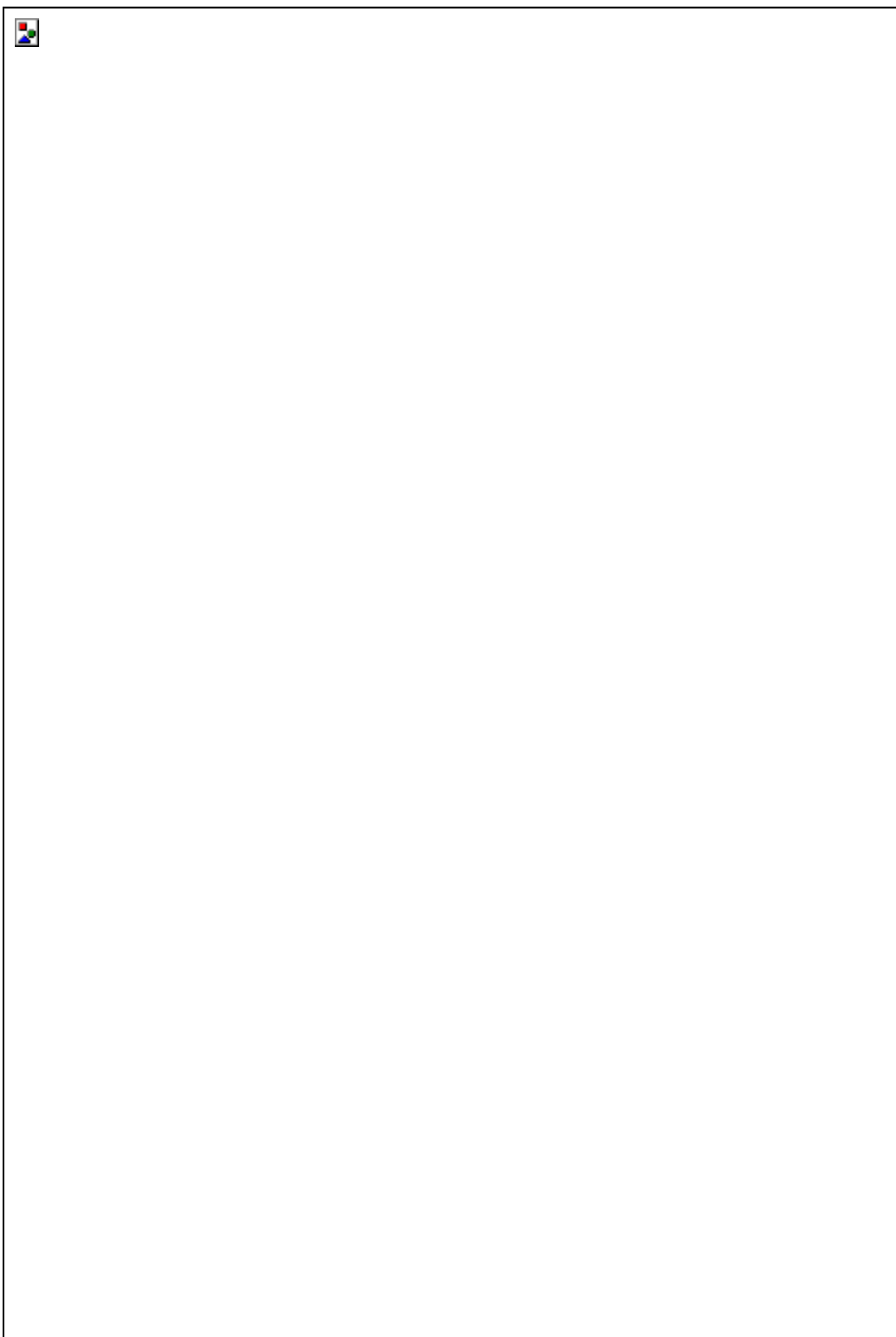
Annex B – Potential KPIs for Trial

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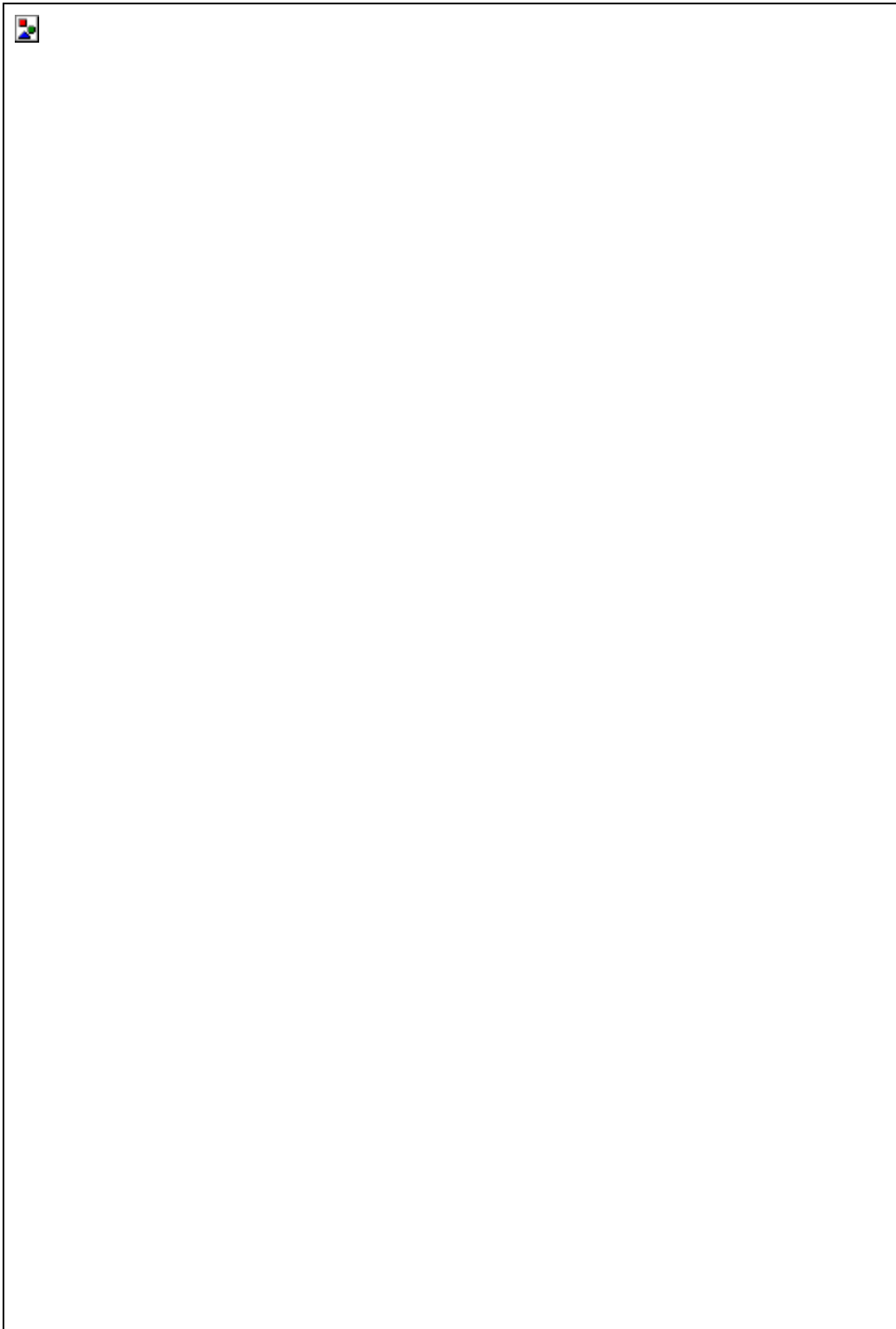
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Annex A – Sample KPI Template (1/3)



<https://bernardmarr.com/img/KPI%20Indicators%20Template.pdf>

Annex A – Sample KPI Template (1/3)



<https://bernardmarr.com/img/KPI%20Indicators%20Template.pdf>

Annex A – Sample KPI Template (3/3)



<https://bernardmarr.com/img/KPI%20Indicators%20Template.pdf>

Annex B – Potential KPIs for Trial

PERSONNEL	a. CAF member satisfaction
	b. CAF member absenteeism
	c. CAF member attrition
	d. Civilian Employee satisfaction
	e. Civilian Employee absenteeism
	f. Civilian Employee attrition
	g. Quantity of positions filled by member able to work 8 hour days
	h. Quantity of positions filled by member unable to work 8 hour days
	i. Quantity of positions “double hatted” or “acting”
SUPPLY	a. Quantity of backlog orders
	b. Time to fill requests
	c. Number of customers served at Clothing Stores
	d. Wait time at Clothing Stores
	e. Quantity of R&D backlog
	f. Average wait time of R&D processing
	g. Average wait time of RPPL customers
	h. Rate of requests filled on time
TRANSPORT	a. % serviceability of priority base fleets
	b. Rate of operator maintenance and Operator Repair Ledger (ORL) completion
	c. Quantity of transport requests received, and from what units
	d. Quantity of transport requests filled
	e. Quantity of CMTT moved
	f. Wait time for CMTT customers
MAINT	a. Backlog of work hours, by fleet
	b. Duration of VOR
	c. Vehicle downtime waiting for LPO
	d. Vehicle downtime waiting for parts in Supply
	e. Quantity of National Recovery Service requests received; from what units
FOODS	a. Quantity of box lunches provided
	b. Quantity of hot meals provided
	c. Quantity of food wasted
	d. Satisfaction with meals provided
	e. How much advance notice given for meal requests
POSTAL	a. Quantity of mail processed
	b. Quantity of customers served
	c. Average wait time of customers
ADMIN	a. Quantity of claims processed
	b. Quantity of backlogged claims
	c. Average wait time of claims completion