



**Preferred Working Group:** Military Leadership, Command and Control and Basic Competences

**Type:** Paper Presentation

**Title:** The Promise of Bottom-Up Innovation Leadership Models: A Canadian Armed Forces Experience

**Author:** Philippe Beaulieu-Brossard, Ph.D., Archipelago of Design/Canadian Forces College; Michele Mastroeni, Ph.D., Archipelago of Design/OCAD University

Correspondence: [pbeaulieub@aodnetwork.ca](mailto:pbeaulieub@aodnetwork.ca)

**Abstract:** In this paper, we argue that there is no substitute to the potential of building on bottom-up design and innovation leadership practices to develop a genuine culture of innovation across NATO members and partners. We support this argument by unpacking BREAKAWAY, a new model developed by the Archipelago of Design for the Canadian Armed Forces and by articulating the advantages of this approach in contrast to two alternatives: top-down design & innovation models and outsourcing innovation. By sharing the ethnographic research behind this model building on more than 61 interviews with a diversity of CAF officers, we show how the model is bringing to the foreground existing situational innovative practices that are already viable in the institution. The model also shares 10 archetypes that are alternative ways of innovating as well as the existing language enabling innovative practices in the institution. In turn, circulating the model also accelerates the development of a culture of innovation by bringing to awareness a wide range of possibilities for CAF officers to innovate that they may not have considered before. For CAF officers, the translation works required to mobilize this model is therefore more seamless in contrast to top-down or external models imported into the institution. Likewise, the paper argues that outsourcing innovation as in the case of NATO DIANA generates similar barriers to developing a culture of innovation since deliverables are rarely compatible with the existing culture of the institution and often align more with external needs rather than the needs of NATO members and partners.