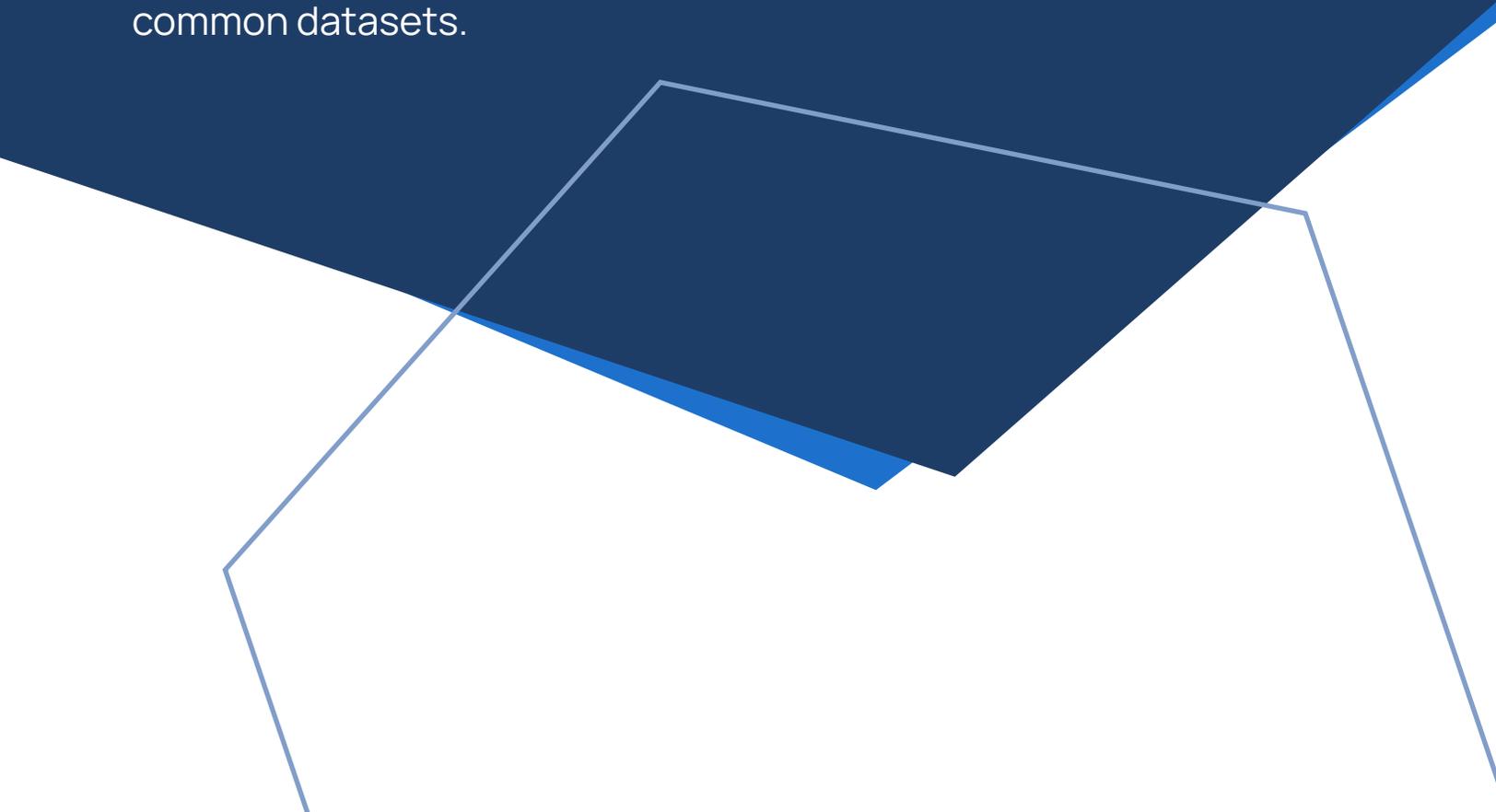# In the business of defence.

The story of how Strategic Portfolio Management saved one public sector enterprise 10% in defence spending and transformed their weapon program.

What you will learn:

- The importance of a holistic, configured network model in managing complex defense portfolios.

- The importance of subject matter expertise, organizational intellect and how AI will not ever replace this in the case of defence.

- The role of Portfolio Strategy and Roamapping software in transforming decision-making and reducing budget waste.

- Insights from the Head of Strategy and Planning from a large public defence organisation on the impact of visualization tools in a complex enterprise.

- How confident and mature leadership is critical to help handle transparency of data that digital technology provides.

- The future of enterprise network modeling in defense, driven by live, common datasets.

In the intricate world of defense, where bringing a new capability—whether infrastructure, platform, or weapons system—into service can take over a decade, strategic roadmapping is critical to ensure success.

A small planning and risk team was tasked with supporting a large, complex defense enterprise that required sustained investment and unwavering political will. Given the scale and cost, making the right decisions early on was essential; the enterprise simply couldn't afford the time or expense of pivoting midway through their projects.

As the Head of Strategy and Planning remarked,

> "It should never be a case of a list of capabilities of which you can only afford to land a small proportion.
> In these difficult times, we not only need to be better than that, but we cannot afford not to be."

The challenge
The task at hand was daunting:

- Create a Configured Network Model: The team needed to understand "cause and consequence" at multiple levels across the enterprise.

- Articulate a Delivery Strategy: Alongside the model, a clear and coherent narrative was required to guide strategy and decision-making.

- Mitigate Risk: This involved making timely decisions to generate appropriate interventions and reduce potential risks.

- Eliminate Budget Waste: The overarching goal was to save costs across the entire portfolio by avoiding inefficiencies.

The enterprise in question managed a range of strategically important, technically complex, and interdependent portfolios, programs, and projects. Each had a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) with a strong focus on delivery. However, what was often missing was a holistic, accessible view of the entire operation—one that allowed individuals to accurately determine the likely consequences of an event and collaborate effectively across locations to take appropriate action.

Senior decision-makers from the Civil Service, Military, and Industry tasked the team with building a configured network, "structured around the key build components, infrastructure development, and cross-cutting functions," to identify gaps, issues, and dependencies across the entire enterprise.
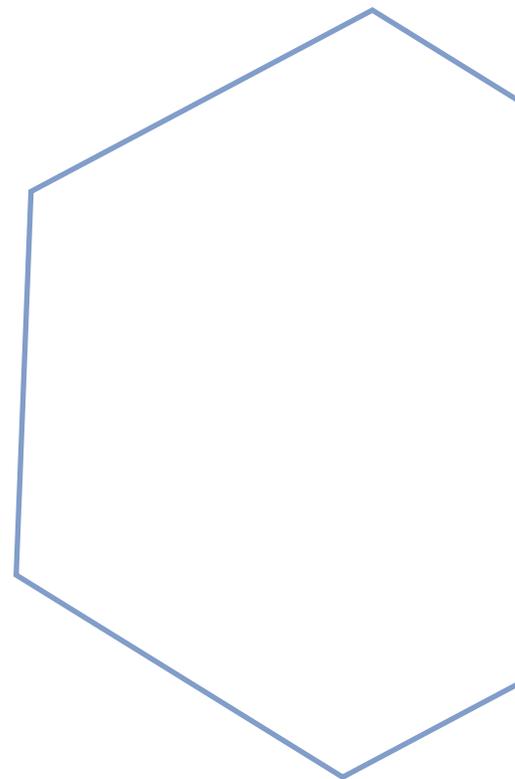
A critical element of success was harnessing the experience and intelligence within the organization to build a reliable roadmap from the outset. As the Head of Strategy and Planning noted, "The diverse cultures of the military, industry, and service sectors generate and sustain a peer-to-peer advantage."

The solution

To address these challenges, the team needed advanced scheduling and visualization tools to connect complex schedules, visualize the entire enterprise, and simplify its complexity. However, existing tools like P6, Excel, and even Palantir fell short. They were unable to perform enterprise network-based analysis, create custom storylines from live data, or present a focused narrative digestible by busy senior staff.

The game-changer came when the team discovered SharpCloud, which had been successfully supporting the Oil and Gas industry in the North Sea. With SharpCloud, they built a configured enterprise network that saved billions in cost wastage. The SharpCloud team responded immediately to their needs, and with the latest version of the software, they began developing next-generation visualization tools that could measure slack in the network and pinpoint the specific events or capabilities affected.

Reflecting on their success, the Head of Strategy and Planning shared, "Back in 2019, we were challenged to find 'the needle in the haystack' by the CEO of one of our industry partners. With SharpCloud, we have done just that and are now shaping and delivering a coherent enterprise solution that will sustain and enhance our defense priority. The benefits flow well beyond our enterprise boundaries, safeguarding capabilities across the wider defense community."
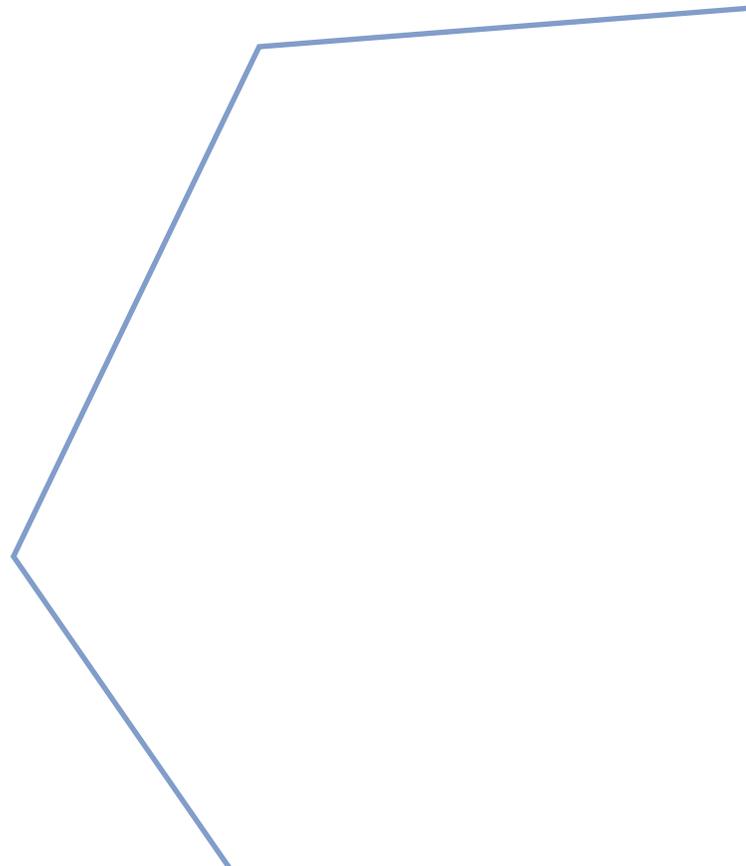
Key learnings from the Head of Strategy and Planning

SharpCloud as a Visualization Tool: SharpCloud portfolio management and roadmapping technology supported the delivery of simple, data-rich narratives to senior decision-makers who may not be subject matter experts. It uniquely offered opportunities to unify an enterprise that spans international, federal, military, and industrial boundaries, enriching the decision-making process and maximizing value from constrained technological and financial resources.

Transparency and Accountability: The ability to simplify complexity and deliver transparent, well-evidenced narratives was crucial for success. There was no room to avoid or delay decisions, requiring a confident and mature leadership team to handle such transparency.

Institutional Learning and Risk Mitigation: The network informed by SharpCloud technology captured institutional learning, broadened the experience base, and mitigated costly risks. This capability has proven invaluable to the enterprise.

Significant Cost Savings: Saving 10% of a multi-million or billion-dollar budget with technology like SharpCloud makes digital roadmapping and strategy portfolio management an essential exercise and tool for any large enterprise.

Looking to the future

The enterprise is now collaborating with a broader group of national and international partners to develop the third generation of network modeling capabilities. Driven by a live, common dataset, this initiative spans enterprise boundaries and integrates with various digital planning tools. It links the in-service environment with build lines, disposals, and the supply chain, all within a secure and compartmentalized framework.

As this partnership continues to evolve, it's clear that the future of defense will be shaped by the strategic use of advanced strategic portfolio and roadmapping tools like SharpCloud, ensuring that the enterprise remains agile, efficient, and prepared for whatever challenges lie ahead.