# Background Simulation Guide v1.4

INTRODUCTION

Elite: Dangerous features a complex background simulation which drives a dynamic system of ever changing power and influence. Struggles between minor factions are commonplace throughout the galaxy and are led by the actions of player commanders both inadvertently and intentionally through the mission system and other activities. Many players enjoy actively supporting a chosen faction indefinitely; helping to win their battles, defending territory and expanding the faction's operations into nearby star systems – ultimately building a small empire in their chosen sector of space. Playing the game this way offers an almost strategic, board game like experience and it can be immensely satisfying when your goals and objectives are met. This document outlines the main actions involved in 'playing the background sim' with an aim to give new players a handle on what is required to turn a small faction into an interstellar operation. It is important to note that while altering the local politics of a star system *can* be done by a lone commander, it will be far easier in groups of people all working towards a common goal, particularly as the faction grows. Where there is unity, there is victory.
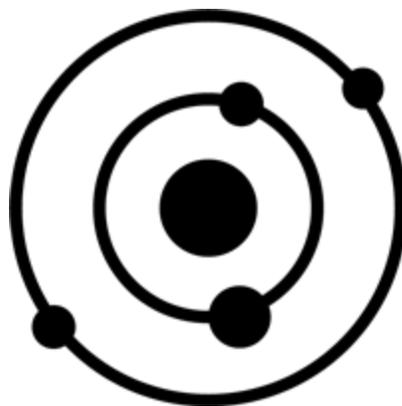
FACTIONS

The galaxy in 3302 is home to thousands of minor factions each vying for power. By working solely with a chosen local faction it is possible to create a power shift from one local faction to another. The influence attribute is key to how the background simulation assigns power to each of the local factions and the states applied to them. A system's controlling faction always owns the most important station in the system; usually the largest and wealthiest.

Each faction has its own unique representatives who can be viewed from mission boards on stations. Who you talk to depends on your current level of reputation. These change as you progress but all of them will offer you missions that reflect your standing.

These minor factions have the ability to expand into surrounding systems if they manage to secure a certain level of influence in any of the systems they control. There is no limit to the amount of systems a faction may be present in, meaning particularly successful parties can be spread over an area covering many light years. Some factions may be tied to one of the superpowers while others are truly independent. Faction alignment is indicated by its respective super power logo next to the faction name.

FACTION REPUTATION

When meeting with a faction representative for the first time, the chances are you will be regarded as neutral. While you may be offered missions at this stage, it is highly recommended that you increase your reputation to allied as soon as possible in order to be offered more, high paying contracts. There are a few ways in which to do this with the most obvious being the completion of missions for the faction. However, trading to and from stations owned by the faction also contributes to your reputation as does the handing in of exploration data, combat bonds or bounty claims belonging to the faction.

FACTION GOVERNMENTS

All minor factions have a government type and this dictates how it responds to events or states within the system that it is present in. Some factions have the support of one of the major galactic powers, (Empire, Federation, Alliance) while others are truly independent. You can check this on the system map under the Allegiance and Government attributes. Factions of a similar political structure resolve a conflict over ownership within a system via an election rather than a war.

FACTION ASSET OWNERSHIP

All systems have a controlling station. This is normally the largest and wealthiest, and is owned by the controlling faction. In order to bring it under your faction's control, it must be overtaken by means of a war, civil war, or through an election with the controlling faction. It is not necessary to take ownership of non controlling faction stations in order to gain control of the system, but doing so will be advantageous in the long run. For Horizons players, planetary ports and installations are also available for takeover and are valuable both as boost to influence via trade and to ensure the factions continued presence in a system. If a faction owns an asset, it cannot be ejected from the system until that asset is lost to another party. Once your faction has control of a system, it will own the controlling station. Keeping influence high will ensure that the system remains under control while you concentrate on other goals elsewhere. However, you may wish to control ALL stations in your systems which can offer much more stable influence levels. There is only one method of achieving this and that is to match the influence with another faction and taking a drop in influence in order to trigger a war or election. A risky technique yes, but it is currently the only way for assets to change hands.

FACTION JURISDICTION

When your faction controls an area of space within a system, it has jurisdiction in certain zones. These zones are in the areas of space around stations as well as the system as a whole including trade lanes and deep space. This means that you, or any other player commander who is bounty hunting in the system can cause influence to rise accordingly with each bounty claim handed in. This is extremely useful for increasing influence for your faction as well as being personally profitable.

INFLUENCE

Player actions affect the distribution of power between minor factions in a plethora of ways. This is reflected in a daily update, or '*server tick*'.

Influence is recorded as a percentage and is updated once per day during the server tick along with the application or removal of states. Each faction is assigned what has been described as an influence *pot*. Each and every action performed by players in any given system will result in a value being added to the pot. This could be the completion of a mission, a successful trade, or the taking down of an NPC ship. Almost every action you do affects the background simulation in one way or another. Every 24 hours, the values in each faction's pot are tallied and converted into a percentage of the total amount of actions completed in that system. Once done, the resulting percentages are applied to each faction's influence. The current distribution of influence among the various local factions can be viewed in detail from the left panel of your system map at any time or from the right panel under system status for the system where you are currently located. It is extremely important to check the local news bulletins on a daily basis. These articles can make you aware of events across all of the systems where your faction is present and are an invaluable source of information. In addition, they also report on expansion states indicating where your faction has expanded to, something BGS players have requested since day one.

The following describes the main methods of affecting influence levels:

MISSION BOARD

It cannot be stressed enough that the mission system is by far the most effective method in gaining influence. Indeed, a system can be change hands purely by performing missions for your own faction and nothing else. Missions should be run SOLELY for your faction and under no circumstances should you take missions offered by any other faction in a system where your faction is present. This can lead to an increase of influence for our rivals and may cause a reduction of our own.

If you are new to supporting your faction, or it has very low influence, it may be difficult to obtain missions until the faction gets a solid footing. However, increasing your reputation will give you access to more and higher paid contracts. Note that you may accept missions from ANY bulletin board, even on rival faction

owned stations. Where you collect the mission is irrelevant, providing you accept missions only from your chosen faction.

The types of mission offered will change depending on the current active state. For example, during a civil war, you will most likely find missions directly relating to the destruction of enemy ships in a conflict zone or other combat oriented contracts. During a boom state, you may see an abundance of high paying cargo transport or commodity requisition contracts.

Each mission comes with a reputation and influence value, represented by a + symbol alongside it's rewards. Some may offer a higher reputation boost than an influence gain or vice versa. The more + symbols, the higher the gain. Failing a mission has (arguably) no effect on faction influence, but your own reputation level will be reduced which can lead to a possible drop in your faction relationship.

EXPLORATION DATA

Handing in exploration data at your faction's stations will give it an influence boost. This is particularly advantageous during an expansion state. It is suggested that handing in data in increments rather than all at once has greater effect. You should avoid handing in exploration data at rival stations in systems where your faction is present.

TRADING

You can increase influence by trading to and from stations owned by your faction. No goods should be traded in rival faction stations where your faction is present. Importing goods that are in high demand and exporting products that are in high supply from your stations will increase influence and wealth. Importing weapons, drugs and black market trading will increase the chances of lockdown or civil unrest and should be avoided in your own stations. Black Market trading should be done at rival stations only. Trading is particularly advantageous during a boom state where influence gain is doubled.

WARZONES AND PRIVATEERING

Where your faction has very low influence in a system, piracy and privateering will steer the campaign in the right direction. Killing enemy faction ships will lower their influence and enforce states such as lockdown or civil unrest on our rivals, enabling us to take advantage of the reduced influence gain while we increase your own.

Bounty hunting in systems will help raise influence provided you are doing it in space controlled by your faction. Bounties are attributed to the faction who control the space where criminals are destroyed. No bounty vouchers should be cashed in belonging to local rival factions. Bear in mind that firing on clean ships will eventually make their faction hostile to you and ultimately tag you with a bounty.

Both the war and civil war states allow pilots to participate in conflict zones. These appear randomly throughout the system. When entering a conflict zone, you should first choose to side with your faction from the right panel, allowing you to earn combat bonds which in turn can be handed in at local stations to increase your faction's influence. You can increase your earnings and influence gain through simultaneously accepting combat missions for your chosen faction. The location of a conflict zone makes no difference to the outcome and normal rules of engagement do not apply; your reputation and status among the factions in conflict will remain intact along with major faction reputation, if applicable.

EXTRACTION

Miners should sell their haul only to stations belonging to their faction. This will increase influence in the same manner as trading. Minerals in high demand are particularly advantageous. Bear in mind that many missions also require mined commodities, which not only pay better, but add influence to the faction far more than simply selling commodities on the open market.

PASSENGERS AND TOURING

Like all other mission based activities, many passenger lounge contracts also add influence to a faction's pot during the daily tick. Contract types tend to change alongside local state alterations to match the events that are occurring within a systems borders. During a conflict for example, refugee or important military figurehead transports will become more commonplace and these benefit the faction you are supporting as much as any other 'normal' mission types. It's important to note however, that many - but not all - long distance or tourism contracts offer higher pay but no influence gain. Remember that you can always check by reading the mission rewards before you accept a contract in the same way you do with all other missions.

STATES

The primary purpose of driving influence is to apply states in order to trigger conflicts with other factions. States have varying effects on a faction's day to day operations. Some are advantageous to influence gain while others may be detrimental. By coordinating and carefully controlling the application of states to both supported and rival factions, it is possible to guide the flow of influence in your favour. Active, pending and cooldown states can be viewed on the right hand status panel for each populated system. Active states can also be viewed on the system map on the left panel and are vital to the exchange of power between factions. Arguably, the most important states are the expansion, war, civil war and election states as these are the ones that make the most drastic changes to system and asset ownership. Note that states can be queued depending on the circumstances, and it is not unusual to have two or three states pending. This is a useful addition and offers scope to plan for forthcoming events.

[BOOM] The most common state of all. Boom states start when there are increases in trade and from the completion of missions. While active it increases the wealth of the faction's stations and benefits from trade missions completed for the minor faction. These are often accompanied by the appearance of 'Seeking [Goods]' NPCs within the system. Selling goods in high demand and buying commodities in high supply are known to have great effect. Boom states are generally a pretext to an expansion if conditions are right. Boom states are often overridden by other more important states such as wars, expansions and lockdowns.

[BUST] Economic Bust is applied when there is a downturn in a faction's economy. The period is marked by a decrease in productivity and reduced demand. Bust is often triggered when a local faction sees a little to no trade in its stations, where demand is not being met. Bust generally runs for the entire duration (28 days).

[LOCKDOWN] Triggered by low security and development level for system. Increases security level while active and loses wealth for the same period. Bounty hunting for the minor faction has greater impact. Accompanied by *checkpoints* within the system. Missions that increase lockdown on your rivals and importing illegal goods, drugs, weapons and armour are good ways to incite this state.

[CIVIL WAR] Triggered by equalising the influence of competing minor factions, or when a single minor faction reaches 60-70% influence. Creates conflict zones and only combat missions or actions provide any benefit to the minor faction. During this time, influence for the warring factions can only be drawn from the opposing side. Station ownership may change hands depending on the outcome of the conflict. Civil

wars theoretically last 28 days or until one faction gains a 15% advantage. If this is not achieved within that timeframe, the war results in a draw and no assets change hands.

[WAR]   War is triggered when a non-local faction (after an expansion) equalises influence with a competing minor faction or reaches 70% influence. Once begun, the time frames and outcomes are identical to civil war. If a faction loses a war in a foreign system, there is a chance it may lead to a retreat state.

[ELECTION] When two factions are of the same government type, a local election is held instead of a war or civil war. At the end of the state's cycle, the faction with the highest influence wins the election. Control of stations/systems can be taken if there is a 15% difference in influence.

[CIVIL UNREST] Triggered on decreases of security through illegal activity. While active it continues to lower security and standard of living for the system. All combat missions and actions for the minor faction are more effective. Like Lockdown, this state is a good way to slow the influence gain of your rivals.

[FAMINE] The faction is not able to support its own population through normal means – typically only affects agricultural worlds, although other worlds that are not importing enough food can slip into this state. All food production is removed and market requirements for food increased.

[OUTBREAK] Triggered by low level standard of living and development level. Decreases standard of living while active. Medicine trade missions are more effective, combat missions and actions provide no benefit to the minor faction.

[EXPANSION] Triggered when influence is high enough (experience suggests that this requires 60% influence or more). Decreases wealth while active and increases development level at the same time. The supported minor faction is then added to the minor faction list of a nearby system. There is no current way to direct the faction towards any particular system. The background simulation appears to choose randomly from populated star systems less than 30 light years away from the expanding system.

[RETREAT] The retreat state is triggered when a faction drops to a predetermined level in any given system. Unless said faction can turn it around by raising influence, it will eventually leave the system. This will not apply to a faction who owns at least one asset in the system, including installations with no docking facilities.

[INVESTMENT] Factions that fail to expand due to systems being either full, (we have witnessed systems having a maximum of 8 factions) or are too far away (30LY) begin the Investment state. This significantly

increases development level for a short time and lets the faction search a bit further away when they next expand.

<div align="center">READING STATES</div>

You can check which faction states are active using the system status menu on your right panel. This displays information on all local factions in a populated system. Additionally, it is also possible to see what states are active, pending or in recovery here. Only one state can be triggered at a time and this applies to EVERY system that faction is present in. For example, if the faction is at war in one system, it cannot enter into another state elsewhere until the conflict is resolved and the cooldown has expired. Some states such as expansion or boom will affect each system the faction is present in and will show up on the right panel in each and every one. Others, such as war or election only show as being active in the system where the event is transpiring, although it still affects the entire faction as a whole. This has led to many players assuming there is a bug halting progress, therefore it is recommended that you inspect each of your controlled systems daily to check the active states.

As you might expect, controlling and influencing a multisystem faction will become increasingly difficult as states appear elsewhere in systems your faction is present in, ultimately interfering with the others. As your faction becomes larger, it will require more micromanagement to keep things running smoothly. One of the most important lessons in controlling multiple systems is this:

Losing influence is not always bad for your faction!

The controlling of states requires much thought and consideration, and the last thing you want is an expansion in one system while attempting to start a war in another. Sometimes leaving a system alone to work on others is the only way forward.

HOW STATES AFFECT INFLUENCE GAIN

The table below details the effects that states have on the application of influence to a faction. Also listed are the various methods best employed in countering negative states.

STATE	INFLUENCE EFFECT

Expansion	All activities contribute to influence gain
War	Only combat missions and activities contribute towards influence gain
Civil War	Only combat missions and activities contribute towards influence gain
Election	Combat actions and missions do NOT contribute towards influence gain
Boom	Trade and commodity missions contribute double influence gain
Bust	No influence can be gained
Civil Unrest	Collecting bounties doubles the effect of removing the state
Famine	Trading foodstuffs doubles the effect of removing the state
Outbreak	Trading medicine doubles the effect of removing the state
Lockdown	Collecting bounties doubles the effect of removing the state
Retreat	All activities contribute towards influence gain

STATE TIMEFRAMES

Each state has a countdown and cooldown period as well as a minimum and maximum active length. See the table below for details. The numbers are equal to server ticks, ie. days.

STATE	COUNTDOWN	MIN LENGTH	MAX LENGTH	COOLDOWN

Expansion	5	3	5	2
War	3	3	28	0
Civil War	3	3	28	0
Election	3	3	5	2
Boom	2	3	28	3
Bust	2	3	28	3
Civil Unrest	1	3	7	3
Famine	3	3	28	25
Outbreak	4	3	28	7
Lockdown	1	3	14	1