

SFU Unification Wars

A short guide about starting your empire

Preface

Although it is perfectly possible to choose any path in developing your empire there may be a few things one might choose to go for in the early phase of empire development. Some of them are ultimately easier with a low empire level and it will be a good strategy to think about your long term goals before making decisions. To get a stable base of income for your empire it is important to realize the influence of these decisions on a later phase of the game. So here are 2 important points you should be aware of (and achieve imho) early in your empires life. It may seem a bit tedious and will take you longer to get to a higher rank but its definitely worth it.

1. Empire Level

Besides the obvious goal to become the strongest empire in terms of planets you need to keep in mind that certain projects are only available to empires with a certain empire level. In my opinion the two most important projects (besides training your ministers) are System Defense and Space Program. They mark the levels that are somewhat critical to achieve as they give you a better defense or free planets every 18 hours.

Your empires level is calculated from:

number of planets + population in your system + pop/planet count of your vassals

Level 1 : 0		Level 9 : 5,000,000	
Level 2 : 1,000		Level 10 : 10,000,000	SD2
Level 3 : 5,000		Level 11 : 50,000,000	
Level 4 : 10,000	SP1	Level 12 : 100,000,000	SP3 & SD3
Level 5 : 50,000		Level 13 : 500,000,000	
Level 6 : 100,000		Level 14 : 1,000,000,000	SP4 & SD4
Level 7 : 500,000		Level 15 : 5,000,000,000	
Level 8 : 1,000,000	SP2 & SD1	Level 16 : 10,000,000,00	SP5 & SD5

Apparently it is very easy to reach empire level 6 with planets alone - to have 200.000+ planets is a task easily achieved even without attacking others. It may even be possible to get above the 500.000 mark. From that on it will become a lot more difficult to maintain a high pop/planet count and obviously one solution is to maintain a population.

In general (unless youre playing collective race for example) for each of your houses you will get 10 population, so a 50.000 planet system with full houses will get you 500.000 population. if you decide to invest into housing research, each level will allow for 1 additional population / house. for example with housing research at lvl 30 you would get 10 + 30 x number of houses population - in the example above that would mean 2.000.000 population. However it is important not to forget that poulation raises food demand and you need to produce food as well (one good reason for having a farm system...) Primarily having no food for population means that you will not generate income for the turns you spend in such a situation.

2. System Levels

The second important aspect to consider early in the game is your system level. A system with a higher level will generate better income than with a low one and although it may seem to be hard to get the 450.000 planets needed to get the average system to level X its really easy when done early in the game

For each level you need to sacrifice 10000 x lvl number of planets to upgrade, and - of course - the upgrade system project. To get to level 2 u need 10.000 planets to get to level 3 you need 20.000 planets and so on. To give just one example if you have a capital system with lvl 1 you will get whatever income it generates, but if your system is level X you will get +820% of your base income. Its more than obvious why it is an advantage to have only lvl X (or better) systems, but there are reasons why it becomes the more difficult to upgrade your systems the stronger your empire already is.

First it is due to the fact that you will become a popular target when you have a lot of planets and may thus encounter a situation where you cannot achieve enough planets to upgrade because people keep take your planets away too fast. Second you will find that it will become less and less profitable to explore the more

planets you have. Roughly at about 50.000 to 70.000 it will be nearly impossible to get enough additional planets by exploring to advance to the next system levels.

So what to do ? There are two strategies you can employ which will both let you get 100.000+ planets within the maximum number of turns you get. One of them is exploring, but thats not easily available to all races, the other is by attacking other empires.

for both strategies it is vital not to cling to the planets you already have but to be willing to dispose of them. you need the destroy system project before you start and heres what to do:

Upgrade your systems one after another - in this phase havin few planets is good, having many planets is bad as it attracts enemies to attack you.

Do the following:

1. Gain enough planets to upgrade to your system

(if youre on a low level like lvl 1 you can of course get enough planets to upgrade more than one lvl...)

2. Upgrade your system

3. With the planets left create a new system, leaving not more than 3000 planets on your upgraded system.

4. Use the Destroy System to get rid of the newly created system.

5. If you got enough turns left start over with step 1

when your system has reached lvl X, do the same with the next system and so on until all of your systems are lvl X (or better).

ad 3. the reason to keep a low planet number lies in the requirment to have really few planets to be able to explore a huge number of them. it will also prevent people from attacking you as theres nothing to get from your empire.

ad 4. you can try to simultaneously upgrade several planets. but it will then be more important to keep your planet count low.

the minimum number of planets you should keep in a system is 1500 though ! that is because even a low planet system may loose up to 1500 planets from a single attack thus annihilating your whole system. so a system should at least have 2000 planets to survive the occasional random attack, although you can expect to be nearly never attacked with such low systems.

ad1.: techniques to achive planets:

a. exploring

the easiest way is to explore planets. the numbers i provide are supposed to work with collective race which cannot build scout ships and have a very low exploration rate (900). its up to you to figure out how to explore with collectives though ;).

first of all its important to realize that there is a exploration rate that tells how many planets you will explore from a given system. for collective this is 900. this rate goes down with every planet you explore every (!) turn so in the end spending 99 turns exploring will not give you 900×99 planets (that is 90.000) planets but something about 60 to 70.000 planets.

however this rate (this is what i gather from my own experience) can be modified. as it may not be relevant when starting to explore it will become more important with how many scouts you explore with each turn. that is with a high number of scouts you cannot go over the 900 rate as it is the maximum you can have, but you can keep longer at it with more scouting ships.

the second thing to know is that when you use max turns (99) to explore you will achieve a certain number of planets and - i would guess due to server updating delay - you can use another 99 turns exploring with exactly the same result if you do it immediately after the first one. so if you get 65000 planets with the first exploration run you will get 65000 again, despite the rule that more planets will highly lessen your exploration rate !

so whatever happens, you will be able to explore all the 90.000 planets necessary to get from lvl 9 to lvl X with two runs. (it might be possible for other races to do it in 1 run of course). if your goal is lower its smart not to use 99 turns again, but to estimate how many planets you will need for advancing the next 1 or 2 levels and use less turns.

this is another good reason to tailor your planet number to a count as low as possible then. you will again have

a high rate and might have enough turns left for another run, giving you more planets than you would get by exploring three runs of 99 turns in a row, as the third run will definitely gain you far less planets.

b. attacking

it is also possible to achieve 100k+ planets „at once“ by attacking, although it takes a bit longer than exploring. the reason why it works is the fact that the vast majority of players is spread very evenly and that in low ranks it is easy to find empires with no defense.

here are the steps to take:

1. build a really small fleet

that only changes your pr (power rating) insignificantly and doesn't change your rank much.

2. go to the attack page and select a target that has more planets than you but a lower, equal or only slightly higher pr than you

3. attack and get planets

4. go to step 2

power rating depends on the number of planets + the strength of your fleet

example (the numbers here are not perfectly realistic though as im too lazy to look it up):

you have 10.000 planets and 400 ships, your pr is 564.800 (with an r.sloop ship)

if you see someone with 10.000 planets and a lower pr than yours you know he probably has no fleet at all

if you see someone with 10.000 planets and a higher pr you definitely know he has a bigger fleet than you

if you see someone with 12.000 planets and a pr of about 600.000 you know he probably has no fleet

and so on...

there's a formula to calculate that (which doesn't take pop into account) but this is more about getting the general idea and by time you will get feeling who is too high above you to attack.

the idea is that you try to attack empires with no defending fleet and that if you have a small fleet you can attack players with more planets and thus a higher pr than yours with being successful 90% of the time. in the lowest ranks the relative pr difference can be quite high (you can see that in the number in the rightmost column of the attack screen), the higher you get the less this difference should be.

roughly spoken you will find nearly no resistance up to empires with 100.000 planets and you will find enough victims up to empires with 200.000 planets. in this range (100k to 200k planets) it will become more important to pick the right opponents.

roughly spoken (again) you can expect to get not more than 1500 planets from a system with up to 20.000 planets, up to 3000 planets from systems between 20 to 30k planets and so on. so in the later ranking range it's worth checking a few opponents. the best victim is someone who concentrates all planets into 1 system, whereas an enemy with 100000 planets divided into 8 12500 planet systems is a very bad target (you might only get 750 planets or so). as each attack pushes your pr up quite significantly it's important to pick the right target in the upper regions of ranks as you will not be able to attack the same guys from the same ranking page a second time.

you will find that you can boost from a superlow rank up to a 150000 planets empire in no time. upgrade your system, dispose of excess planets and start over at the bottom of the ranking page :)

3. Synopsis

0. if you play for a considerable time and still have less than 100.000 planets turn away in shame now :P

1. Check system types in the manual to see what each system will be at level X (it's in the manual !)

2. Decide on the layout of your empire (what systems you want to have) depending on your race bonuses (also in the manual). a few dark planets at the end of your empire may be nice but don't overestimate them.

3. Have at least Upgrade System project and Destroy System project finished !

4. Start upgrading ALL your systems to level X

5. Make use of either the attacking or the exploring technique to boost your empire to 150k planets

6. Now you have a good empire together with the best systems you can ever get. Learn more about researching and ministers and make good use of them. Learn how to survive and succeed in the top 100.