Operations Division

Science for Peace and Security Programme

Event Handbook

Advanced Research Workshop (ARW)

Advanced Study Institute (ASI)

Advanced Training Course (ATC)

Applicable to Event applications submitted as from November 2023

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1. Introduction

The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme (SPS) seeks to enhance cooperation and dialogue between NATO member states and NATO partner countries through civil science and innovation. The SPS Programme funds security-related activities relevant to NATO's strategic objectives which address **SPS Key Priorities** (available on the SPS website). SPS offers grants for research and development Multi-Year Projects and Events (Advanced Research Workshops, Advanced Study Institutes, and Advanced Training Courses).

This Handbook describes the financial and administrative procedures for the management of **SPS Events**, and sets out the general terms and conditions governing grants made under this Programme. Additional procedures, terms and conditions may also be set out in the Award Letter or in the approved Event application.

This Handbook and application material are also available on the NATO SPS website: www.nato.int/science.

All relevant enquiries prior to application submission should be addressed to SPS via the contact form on the SPS website.

1.1. What types of Events does NATO SPS sponsor?

1.1.1. Advanced Research Workshop (ARW)

An ARW is a **two to five days** meeting for high-level intensive discussions on a security-related topic in one or more of the SPS Key Priority areas, engaging 20–50 experts from NATO countries and eligible NATO partner countries. In addition to their role in disseminating the latest results, ARWs also serve to formulate recommendations and conclusions for policy or further study, and to foster partnerships among experts from different countries, often leading to the formation of new research collaborations.

1.1.2. Advanced Study Institute (ASI)

An ASI is a short course, typically lasting **seven to ten days**, where expert lecturers bring to an audience of early stage researchers a focused, in-depth curriculum on a security-related topic in one of the SPS Key Priority areas. ASIs are typically aimed at researchers at post-doctoral level, although students in earlier stages of their careers can often benefit as well. ASIs have the specific role of contributing to the training and motivation of early stage researchers particularly in NATO partner countries, of introducing and interesting scientists in topics relevant to NATO, and of building networks.

1.1.3. Advanced Training Course (ATC)

An ATC is a focused training course typically lasting **five to seven days** which enables specialists in NATO countries to share their expertise in one of the SPS Key Priority areas with trainees, primarily from NATO partner countries but also from NATO

countries. ATCs provide training to experts with an appropriate background who wish to learn about recent developments in their areas of expertise. ATCs contribute to the training and motivation of experts in NATO partner countries, and enable the formation and strengthening of international expert networks.

1.2. Who can apply?

SPS Events are collaborations between an institution in a NATO nation and an institution in a NATO partner country.

> **NATO Countries:** Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, the Republic of North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States.
>
> **NATO partner countries:** ~~Afghanistan~~[1], Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, ~~Belarus~~[1], Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Malta, Mauritania, the Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Qatar, ~~Russian Federation~~[1], Serbia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan.

Applications must thus be developed and submitted jointly by one applicant from a NATO nation, the NATO country Project Director (NPD) and one from a NATO partner country, the Partner country Project Director (PPD). Each Event will have one NPD and one PPD. The NPD oversees the overall Event execution, and is the primary point of contact for reporting and communication with the SPS office.

Both Co-Directors work together to prepare the programme or curriculum, select experts and other participants (such as ASI students or ATC trainees), and organize Event practicalities. The Co-Directors generally also serve as speakers or trainers themselves during the Event.

The following eligibility criteria must be respected:

- NPD shall be employed by an institution in a NATO country;
- NPD shall be resident in the NATO country where their institution is located;
- PPD shall be employed by an institution in a NATO partner country;
- PPD shall be resident in the NATO partner country where their institution is located;
- NPD, PPD and all other Event participants must be nationals of NATO nations or NATO partner countries.

[1] The partnerships with Afghanistan, Belarus and Russian Federation are currently suspended following North Atlantic Council decisions related to the security environment.

Both Co-Directors must be affiliated with a governmental, academic, or other non-profit institution. For-profit private companies are not eligible for SPS funding.
Individual applicants should note that they may not hold more than one SPS grant at a time. Prospective Co-Directors should ensure that any other SPS activity directed by either of them is formally closed before applying.

1.3. Who can attend?

Participation in ARWs and ATCs is by invitation from the Co-Directors, although they may accept applications if they wish, while ASIs have traditionally been open to application from qualified prospective students. Attendees must come from and be nationals of NATO countries and eligible NATO partner countries, and applicants are encouraged to include attendees from a wide variety of eligible NATO partner countries. In extraordinary cases, and subject to the **prior approval** of NATO, outstanding speakers or trainers from other countries may participate in SPS Events; such speakers must be indicated in the **"A" worksheets** of the Excel spreadsheet included in the application.

In no case may non-speaking participants (e.g. ASI students or ATC trainees) come from non-NATO, non-NATO-partner countries, even if they are a national of an eligible NATO nation or NATO partner country. Once an award has been granted, **attendance from NATO partner countries not identified in the application "A" worksheets is no longer possible.**

Invitations to personnel from NATO itself should be coordinated through the SPS Office, which can help to identify the most appropriate invitees. Co-directors are also encouraged to ensure a gender-balanced list of participants.

When developing an application for an SPS-supported Event, the following definitions should be taken into account:

- **Participants:** All attendees of an SPS Event, including Co-Directors, speakers, and non-speakers.
- **Speaker/Trainer:** Participant in an SPS Event scheduled to give a lecture, training course, or other active participation. Speakers will generally be listed on the Event programme along with the title of their course/lecture.
- **Non-speaker**: Participant in an SPS Event not scheduled to give a lecture, training course, or other active participation. Participants who will present only at a poster session or whose contribution is not scheduled are considered non-speakers.

1.3.1. Advanced Research Workshop (ARW)

ARW participants should be chosen by the Co-Directors for their ability to contribute to the topic of the meeting, and to achieve the appropriate blend of expertise and variety of viewpoints to stimulate discussion and promote the exchange of ideas.

Attendance should be balanced between participants from NATO countries and those from eligible NATO partner countries. No more than 25% of attendees may come from any one country.

1.3.2. Advanced Study Institute (ASI)

Students should be chosen based on their qualifications, promise, and capacity to benefit from and contribute to the ASI. While an ASI is aimed at early stage researchers at a post-doctoral level, exceptionally students in earlier stages of their careers may also be included. ASI students must come from, and be nationals of, NATO countries and eligible NATO partner countries; students from other countries are not permitted to attend. No more than 25% of the students may come from any single country.

Experience has shown that the most successful ASIs have 12 to 15 expert speakers and 60 to 80 students. In special cases, the number of lecturers can be increased slightly, but no more than 15 can be financed by the NATO grant, including the Co-Directors.

1.3.3. Advanced Training Course (ATC)

The Co-Directors and the organising committee are responsible for selecting around 20 to 50 appropriate trainees, primarily from eligible NATO partner countries (although NATO-country trainees may also be considered). ATC trainees should be selected on the basis of their qualifications and experience, and the benefit that they may draw from the ATC for their future activities.

2. Location

SPS Events should take place either in a NATO country or a NATO partner country. SPS supported activities are not public events. Attendance should be clearly defined by the Co-Directors, including eventual online participants.

3. Workshop and training fees

If necessary, organizers of ARWs, ASIs and ATCs may charge a modest fee to trainees for Event costs not covered by SPS.

This fee and its intended use should be clearly detailed **in the application,** and are subject to approval on a case-by-case basis by the SPS Office.

4. The Life of an SPS Event

4.1. Application and evaluation

4.1.1. Application

Prospective Co-Directors work collaboratively to develop an Event plan and jointly fill out the application, which describes the Event and its purpose in detail. The application includes an Excel spreadsheet for attendee lists and budgets. Only the **"A" worksheets** of the Event spreadsheet should be filled in as part of the application. All requested documentation must be completed and submitted together in order for the application to be eligible for evaluation.

Required documents at the time of application are:

- SPS Events Budget (Excel spreadsheet)
- SPS Events Acceptance of Funds
- SPS Events Cooperation Agreement

Templates of the above are available for download on the SPS website under the heading “Managing SPS Grants”.

While preparing the application, applicants should approach potential speakers or trainers about their willingness to participate; their names and their level of commitment to the Event should be included in the application. The application must also include as complete a draft agenda as possible with names of speakers and their provisional talk titles wherever possible.

In preparing a proposal, applicants should keep in mind that the overall approval process for successful applications, from application deadline to confirmation of funding, can take several months. Thus, please allow a **minimum** of nine months between the application **deadline** and the planned date of the Event. If the approval process is not completed in time, the Event may need to be rescheduled.

4.1.2. Format of Events

Especially for ARW, applicants shall consider to structure the Event in an interactive way, and to foresee as much as possible brainstorming sessions, work in different syndicates, development of technical, scientific or policy way forward and recommendations. Normally, it is expected that around 30% of the ARW duration would be devoted to these sessions. Additionally, the applicant shall clearly identify the concrete and tangible outcomes expected, including communication products (website, press releases, articles on general media, etc.) and publications (scientific publications, books, etc.).

4.1.3. Peer-review

Event applications are evaluated by the Independent Scientific Evaluation Group (ISEG), a group of scientists from NATO countries nominated by, but not representing, their respective governments. ISEG members act as peer-reviewers, and base their recommendations on:

- the content and quality of the proposed Event;
- the qualifications and level of commitment of the proposed speakers/trainers;
- the appropriateness of the Event format and programme;
- the relevance to the SPS Key Priorities and the link to defence and security;
- and, for ATC and ASI,
  - the importance and quality of the educational/training objectives
  - the design of the teaching programme
  - the appropriateness and importance of the topic and audience

After review, the ISEG make their recommendations to NATO.

4.1.4. Approval and award

Events recommended by the peer-reviewers are considered by NATO Allies, who make the final decision to fund or reject a proposal.

Should an application be approved by NATO Allies, an Award Letter is issued by the SPS Office informing the Co-Directors of the decision and detailing the conditions of the award. This award letter must be countersigned by the NPD and be returned to the SPS Office, together with the completed instructions for payment, within 30 days to indicate acceptance of the grant. At this time, the Co-Directors must also confirm the planned dates and location of the Event. A period of minimum 90 days should be factored in from the date when the Award Letter is received by the Co-Directors to the date when the Event will take place.

The countersigned Award Letter, its appendices and documents included in it by reference, together with this Handbook, form the contract between NATO on the one side and, on the other, the NATO country Project Director to whom the grant is formally made.

4.2. Event details and advance payment

As soon as possible but no later than 60 days before the start of the approved Event, Co-Directors must send to the SPS Office:

- the final Event programme, including all speakers and titles of presentations; if talk abstracts are available, they should be included as well;
- a copy of any proposed invitation or publicity material; **invitations or distribution of publicity material may not be sent without the prior approval of the SPS Office;**
- a copy of the signed agreement with the Event location;
- a revised version of the Event spreadsheet with the **"B" worksheets** completed
  - a list of speakers and other participants finalized to 90%
  - a revised budget estimate

These documents will be reviewed by the SPS Office and, when approved, up to 85% of the budgeted Event expenses will be paid **into the designated account of the NATO country Project Director's institution**. At this point, organizers can begin to make practical arrangements for Event attendees.

In the case of difficulties or irregularities, the SPS Office reserves the right to require or impose modifications to the budget or the Event, or to terminate the grant.

4.3. Final report and Event balance payment

A report describing the Event and providing the actual list of participants, as well as a financial report (**the "C" worksheets** of the Event spreadsheet), must be submitted to the SPS office **within 45 days** of the Event. Upon approval by the SPS Office, the balance of the Event costs will be paid, up to the lesser of the approved grant budget (i.e. the 15% remaining), or the funds actually spent. If unspent funds remain from the

Advance Payment, they must be returned to NATO as per the instructions provided by the SPS Office.

The template of the **SPS Event Final Report Form** is available for download on the SPS website under the heading “Managing SPS Grants”.

4.4. Publication in the NATO Science Series

NATO recommends, but does not require, that the results of an SPS Event be published.

By special arrangement with Springer Nature and SAGE Publications Ltd. (parent company of IOS Press), Co-Directors of NATO Events have the opportunity to publish in the NATO Science Series. Co-Directors must indicate in the application form whether they plan to do so.

Co-Directors may choose to publish in one of the following formats:

- perpetual Open Access under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC 4.0, provided by SAGE (online edition only);
- traditional sales model with Springer Nature (online and print).

Publication in the NATO Science Series is contingent on acceptance by the publishers. Following award, Co-Directors are responsible for negotiating and concluding the publishing agreement directly with the selected publisher.

SPS will cover the publisher’s fee for the preparation and publication of a manuscript in the NATO Science Series. Payment will be made only upon acceptance of the manuscript by the publisher and receipt by NATO of the signed contract between the Co-Director and the NATO Science Series publisher, but in no case more than nine months after the Event. If the signed publishing contract is not received within nine months of the Event, the file will be closed without payment of these funds.

Publications outside the NATO Science Series is not eligible for these additional funds.

5. Finance

The SPS grant pays for the direct organizational expenses of the Event, including facility and equipment rental, audio-video fees, publicity materials, coffee breaks, and so forth as well as up to €2,000 as project management fee for the NPD in order to cover Event-related miscellaneous expenses. **The organizational expenses should not exceed 25% of the overall grant amount**. Fees for lecturers and time spent on curriculum development are not eligible costs.

The grant will also cover the travel expenses of Speakers/trainers. In addition, the travel expenses of Non-Speakers/trainees from NATO countries and eligible NATO partner countries or International Organizations unable to obtain financial support from other sources can be subsidized.

A single Event dinner or reception can be included in the budget; the travel expenses of attendees should cover all other meals. The organizers are expected to minimise costs by efficient organization of the workshop and the choice of location.

Many organizers find that the SPS grant attracts other support, and joint sponsorship and support are welcome, either as indicated in the application or with the subsequent approval of the SPS Office. Notwithstanding any joint sponsorship, the Event must respect the appropriate format and be designated a "Advanced Research Workshop supported by NATO SPS", “Advanced Study Institute supported by NATO SPS”, or “Advanced Training Course supported by NATO SPS” as appropriate in all Event materials.

The funding awarded for each Event is determined by NATO, taking into account the number of participants, the size, the duration and the location of the meeting; ARWs average €30–40,000, and ASIs and ATCs average €60,000. The grant will be awarded in Euro, but payments may be made in any currency desired by the Co-Directors. NATO cannot be responsible for exchange rate fluctuations.

The implementation of online and hybrid Events may require further discussion with the SPS Office on the distribution and eligibility of costs.

5.1. Conditions

The award letter will be made in the name of the NPD. They are responsible for coordinating expenditures with the PPD and providing financial reporting to NATO. Grant funds must be paid into a **separate account or sub-account established exclusively for this Event** at the NPD’s institution**;** NATO funds shall not be mingled with funds from any other source.

Grantees will manage funds in accordance with the Event budget and other conditions of the SPS Award Letter and with the financial regulations in place at the NATO-country Co-Director’s institution. These regulations must comply with fundamental procurement principles such as competition, transparency, fairness, integrity, etc., as specified in the WTO Government Procurement Agreement. Furthermore, they must contain standards of conduct governing staff engaged in the award and management of contracts under the grant. These standards must include provisions to avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest, and to prohibit the acceptance and solicitation of favours or gratuities from potential or actual recipients of grant funds (i.e. vendors and service providers).

Should NATO, in its sole discretion, require any additional conditions or modifications to these institutional rules, they will be discussed with applicants and included in the Award Letter or communicated to Co-Directors in writing.

In the event of any discrepancy between the rules imposed by NATO (whether by way of this Handbook, the Award Letter, or otherwise) and the financial rules of the institution, the former take precedence.

NATO funds must be used only for **direct Event-specific costs** reflected in the budget. Any misuse of funds or material non-compliance with grant conditions may lead to the immediate termination of the grant and to legal action.

5.2. Documentation

All payments from the grant must be reflected in the final financial report in the **"C" worksheets**. In addition, justifying documentation must be retained for expenses as required by the financial standards of the NATO-country Co-Director's institution. Copies of these justifying documents must be submitted to the SPS Office on request. Original justifying documents should be retained by each Co-Director, and approved copies by the NATO-country Co-Director for at least five years after the Event.

6. Inspection and audit

Grant recipients shall allow NATO representatives or its authorized agents access to their premises and facilities to carry out monitoring reviews and compliance audits; provide them with access to all accounts, records and other information relating to an Event, and respond fully and accurately to any inquiries NATO may make for the purpose of verifying adherence to the terms and conditions of the grant or NATO requirements. The financial records of the Event, including justifying documents, must be made available to the SPS Office upon request. A summary including a current account statement from the holder of the project account shall be made available within one week of the Office's request, while a reasonable delay, not to exceed four weeks, will be accorded for justifying documents.

Furthermore, grant recipients shall

(a) provide any information about the grant that NATO reasonably requests, in a timely manner;
(b) contribute to the monitoring, review and evaluation of NATO's granting programs by participating in reviews, evaluation studies, surveys, audits and other activities organized for the purpose of collecting information to assess progress and results.

7. Visual identity guidelines

All publications, presentations, and other externally distributed materials stemming from the grant shall comply with SPS Visual Identity Guidelines (provided to Co-Directors and available on the SPS website), and shall credit NATO support with the following or a substantially comparable sentence: "This activity was sponsored by the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme under grant id. [GXXXX]."

8. Legal conditions

Grants under the SPS Programme are unilateral grants, made at the sole discretion of NATO. NATO may decline to make any grant or to withhold any grant payment at its sole discretion, in whole or in part. The most recent revision of this Handbook and its required documentation, along with the signed Award Letter, and any documents annexed to it or incorporated in it by reference, constitute the entire terms and

conditions of grants under the SPS Programme. In the event of inconsistencies among these documents, the Award Letter and its annexes take priority over this Handbook and its documentation.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, in the event of any default by a Grant Recipient, or if a Grant Recipient fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions set out in the Handbook, its required documentation or the Award Letter and its annexes, other written communications from NATO, or the financial regulations in place at the NPD's institution, NATO may at its sole discretion suspend (whether in whole or in part) the grant and the payment of any monies, or may terminate the grant. In such circumstance, NATO may at its sole discretion require repayment of some or all unexpended monies, or expended monies, and Grant Recipients are jointly and severally liable for repayment of such monies.