NATO SCIENCE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026-1

The NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme promotes dialogue and practical cooperation between NATO member states and NATO partner countries based on scientific research, technological innovation and knowledge exchange. It enables scientists, experts and officials from Allied nations and NATO partner countries to work together to address emerging security challenges and their impact.

Through the SPS Programme, NATO has demonstrated its longstanding commitment to science, innovation and practical cooperation with NATO partner countries. The SPS Programme offers funding, expert advice and support to tailor-made, civil security-relevant activities that respond to NATO's strategic objectives. Participation in the SPS Programme enables experts and scientists to develop innovative solutions to address today's security challenges, and to build partnerships with their peers in Allied nations and NATO partner countries.

For more information on the SPS Programme and its activities, please visit the NATO SPS website at www.nato.int/science.

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ELIGIBILITY

Only applications meeting all of the following criteria will be taken into consideration.

General eligibility criteria
Applications submitted to the SPS Programme must:

1. Contribute toward NATO's strategic objectives and have a clear link to security;
2. Address at least one of the SPS Key Priorities;
3. Be developed jointly by scientists or experts from at least one NATO member nation and one eligible NATO partner country.
   - All participants in the proposed activity must be nationals of a NATO member nation or one eligible NATO partner country;
   - Each activity must include a scientist or expert taking on the role of NATO country Project Director (NPD). This person must be a resident and employed in a NATO member country;
   - Each activity must include a scientist or expert taking on the role of Partner country Project Director (PPD). This person must be a resident and employed in an eligible NATO partner country (see list below);
   - Additional Co-Directors from either NATO or eligible NATO partner countries may be included in proposals for Multi-Year Projects.
4. Be developed and implemented by Co-Directors employed by governmental, academic, or other non-profit institutions. For-profit private companies are not eligible for SPS funding;
5. Include realistic plans and budgets;
6. Be developed and managed in alignment with rules and regulations outlined in the SPS handbooks available on the SPS website at the following link: https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/organization/nato-structure/science-for-peace-and-security-hub/managing-sps-grants.

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.

Eligible countries
Individuals from the following countries are eligible to participate in activities supported by the SPS Programme:

NATO member countries: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, the Republic of North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Eligible NATO partner countries: Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, 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, Serbia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan.

BOUNDARIES OF THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

- **Available grants:** For this call for proposals, the SPS Programme welcomes applications for Multi-Year Projects and Events (Advanced Research Workshops, Advanced Training Courses and Advanced Study Institutes).

- **Topics of particular interest:**
    - In line with the Key Priority of Innovation and Emerging Disruptive Technologies (EDTs), SPS welcomes proposals focusing on:
        - **Autonomy**, and in particular:
            - Autonomous integration of multi-source data for real-time awareness, predictions, and actionable decisions.
            - Coordination among multiple autonomous platforms on land, at sea (and undersea), in air and/or across domains.
            - Continuity of operations in contested and extreme environments (e.g. GNSS denied spaces, extreme cold, high winds, ice accumulation, solar interference).
            - Human-autonomy teaming.
        - **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, and in particular:
            - Convergence of AI with other security-related technologies in view of its cross-cutting nature.
            - AI and cognitive influence.
            - Human-machine interaction, brain-computer interfaces.
        - **Biotechnologies**, and in particular:
            - Biosensors (e.g. for CBRN detection, environmental monitoring, disease diagnosis).
            - Bioengineering (e.g. chemical synthesis, fuels), biomanufacturing of critical materials or alternatives, or for use in logistically challenging environments.
        - **Space technologies**, including:
            - Space Situational Awareness.
            - Space-based monitoring of the atmospheric, oceanic and space environments.
            - Position, Navigation and Timing.
    - In line with the Key Priority of **Defence against Hybrid Threats**, SPS welcomes proposals focusing on linkages between military and civilian means to counter hybrid threats, build resilience and the required capabilities.
    - Applications aligned with any of the other SPS Programme's Key Priorities will also be considered.

HOW TO APPLY

➢ **For all grant mechanisms:**
  o To familiarize themselves with information required to submit a complete proposal, potential applicants may find templates of the application forms for each SPS grant mechanism on the SPS website under the heading "Managing SPS grants".
  o However, proposals must be drafted and submitted via the SPS grant platform (https://natosps.grantplatform.com/). Proposals submitted in any other format or means (e.g. via email) will not be taken into consideration.
  o Therefore, interested applicants must:
    ▪ Register an account on the SPS grant platform.
    ▪ Identify available opportunities on the SPS grant platform homepage.
    ▪ Click on "Start application" to access the application form, select the grant mechanism they are interested in, and submit their proposal.
    ▪ The SPS Programme strongly advises against last minute submissions.

➢ **For Events only:** The application process for Events will follow **a single-phase approach**.

  o Applicants are invited to submit their full proposal by 31 January 2026 (23:59 CET).
  o The proposal will undergo evaluation by the SPS Office and the Independent Scientific Evaluation Group (ISEG). Proposals recommended by the ISEG for award will be shared with the NATO Partnerships and Cooperative Security Committee (PCSC) for approval.
  o A complete application includes a duly filled out application form on the SPS grant platform, as well as supporting documentation. The following documents, which are also accessible via the application form and available for download on the SPS website under the heading "Managing SPS grants", are an integral part of a complete application:
    ▪ SPS Events Budget
    ▪ SPS Events Acceptance of Funds
    ▪ SPS Events Cooperation Agreement

➢ **For Multi-year Projects only:** The application process for Multi-Year Projects will follow **a two-phase approach**.

  In phase 1:

  o Applicants are invited to submit a short-form proposal by 31 January 2026 (23:59 CET).
  o The proposal will undergo evaluation by the SPS Office and the ISEG.
  o Only applicant whose proposals have been recommended by the ISEG will be invited to participate in phase 2 of the application process.
  o A complete phase 1 proposal includes a duly filled out application form on the SPS grant platform, as well as supporting documentation. Supporting documentation required to submit a complete application includes:
    ▪ A 5-page concept note addressing each of the following questions:
      1. What security challenge(s) would your project address?
      2. What technical challenge(s) would your project address, if any?
      3. What is the state-of-the-art? E.g. current TRL, existing research.
      4. What will the project deliver or develop by the end of the grant? How will the proposed solution advance the state-of-the-art?
      5. How will the project reach the planned end state? i.e. methodology.
      6. What will be the project's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)?

7. What will be the impact of the project after its conclusion?
- The following documents, which are also accessible via the application form and available for download on the SPS website under the heading "Managing SPS grants":
  - SPS MYP Acceptance of Funds
  - SPS MYP Preliminary Agreement for Joint Research

In phase 2:

- Applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal via the SPS grant platform.
- Phase 2 proposals will need to be coherent with the phase 1 submission, and increase the level of detail on the execution of the project, should it be approved.
- The deadline to submit the full proposal will be announced only to those invited to participate in phase 2 of the application process.
- Once submitted, phase 2 proposals will be evaluated again by the SPS Office and the ISEG.
- Proposals recommended for award by the ISEG will be shared with the PCSC for final approval.
- A complete phase 2 proposal includes a duly filled out application form on the SPS grant platform, as well as supporting documentation. Supporting documentation required to submit a complete application includes:
  - Project Schedule (Gantt or other suitable chart).
  - End-user commitment, for each of the project's end-users.
  - Brief overview of participating institutions.
  - The following documents, which are also accessible via the application form and available for download on the SPS website under the heading "Managing SPS grants":
    - SPS MYP Detailed Budget (Excel spreadsheet)
    - SPS MYP Acceptance of Funds
    - SPS MYP Agreement for Joint Research
    - SPS MYP Sample Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Agreement

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

➢ **Review outcomes:** All applicants of short proposals will be informed about the result. Please note that no further feedback will be provided at this stage.

➢ **Resubmissions:** Previously rejected proposals may be resubmitted only once.

➢ **Multiple submissions:** Applicants may be involved as Co-Directors in only one proposal per call.

➢ **Ongoing activities:** Provided that this does not interfere with their ongoing work, Co-Directors of ongoing activities may be involved in new proposals as participants, but not as Co-Directors (i.e. it is not possible to be Co-Director of multiple projects/proposals at the same time).

➢ **Before submitting a proposal**, applicants must map the state-of-the art and identify how their idea innovates on existing academic and industrial efforts. Proposals should demonstrate awareness of the state-of-the-art, and clearly mention how they differ from ongoing work by the project team and others, using appropriate and recent literature references where possible.

➢ **Proposals for Events** should focus on objectives beyond the execution of the event itself. They should clearly elaborate on how events and their results are relevant to NATO, and

explain how organisers will ensure that the results will have an impact on relevant stakeholders and communities of interest. Networking is an integral component of SPS-supported events, but it may not be presented as a goal in itself.

➢ **Proposals for Multi-Year Projects:**

o A sound project should be feasible to implement within the proposed timeframe, and the budget should be realistic, reflecting the work required to reach the desired end-state.

o Budgets for Multi-Year Projects are typically in the range of EUR 250,000-400,000. Budgets should reflect the duration of the project (i.e. shorter projects should require lower budgets). When adequately justified, higher budgets may be considered for activities aligning with priority deliverables, and for proposals involving large consortia of institutions.

o Budgets should be balanced. Each Co-Director's institutions should be allocated a part of the project's budget.

o Should applicants choose to make use of co-financing, a reasonable amount is up to 1/3 of the total grant amount. SPS may consider budgets exceeding this ratio on a case-by-case basis, provided that the proposals provide sufficient justifications.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

Full proposals for Events and phase 1 proposals for Multi-Year Projects must be submitted **before Saturday, 31 January 2026 (23:59 CET)** via the SPS grant platform. Data pertaining to incomplete applications will be lost after the deadline.

All relevant enquiries prior to application submission should be addressed to sps.info@hq.nato.int.

> *The NATO SPS Programme is committed to diversity and inclusion, and welcomes eligible applicants from all NATO and eligible NATO partner countries, independent of gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, cultural background, sexual orientation, and disability.*