The SPS Programme is open to all projects with Kuwait, in line with the political guidance from Allies in the form of the 2012 SPS Key Priorities and the 2013 Overarching Guidelines. The 2018-2020 Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme (IPCP) between NATO and Kuwait gives specific reference to cooperation in the framework of the SPS Programme.

The current SPS Key Priorities include:

- Counter-Terrorism;
- Energy Security;
- Cyber Defence;
- Defence against CBRN Agents;
- Environmental Security;
- Security-related Advanced Technology;
- Border and Port Security;
- Human and Social Aspects of Security.

Additionally, the SPS Programme helps to promote regional security through scientific cooperation among partners. The programme also helps to prepare interested eligible nations for NATO membership. SPS activities often have a high public diplomacy value.

THE ISTANBUL COOPERATION INITIATIVE

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) focuses on practical cooperation in areas where NATO can add value, notably in the security field. Initially, six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council were invited to participate. To date, four of these – Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates – have joined. Saudi Arabia and Oman have also shown an interest in the Initiative. Based on the principle of inclusiveness, the Initiative is however open to all interested countries of the broader Middle East region who subscribe to its aims and content, including the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The ICI is a ‘two-way’ partnership, in which NATO seeks partners’ contribution for its success, through a regular consultation process, where special emphasis is placed on practical cooperation. The SPS Programme is an excellent basis for such practical and concrete partnership activities.

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Following the SPS Information Day at the NATO-ICI Regional Centre in September 2017, a package of five NATO SPS activities were developed. These include tailor-made training courses in the fields of CBRN defence, energy security and cyber defence. Three of the five courses have taken place as part of the 1st Year Activities at the NATO-ICI Regional Centre. The remaining two SPS training courses in the area of cyber defence will be delivered in the course of the 2nd year of the Centre.

COMPREHENSIVE CBRN INCIDENT COMMANDERS COURSE
The Comprehensive CBRN Incident Commanders course was delivered on 3-7 December 2017. This course built upon a previous course organised jointly by the Kuwait National Security Bureau and the NATO Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate in October 2015. The course was attended by 16 participants from the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, National Guard, Fire Service, Ministry of Health, and the Institute for Scientific Research, Civil Aviation, Environment Public Authority and Oil Sector of the State of Kuwait. This tailor-made training course helped develop Kuwaiti security standards matching international requirements and allowing interoperability and effective international cooperation in defence against CBRN agents. In doing so, the course improved Kuwaiti national capabilities and processes to respond to and recover from CBRN incidents. This SPS activity was led by the Joint CBRN Defence Centre of Excellence and Kuwait [SPS ref. G5518]

CRITICAL ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION COURSE
The security and stability of ICI countries heavily depend on stable energy exports and reliable energy infrastructure. Critical energy infrastructure is therefore an attractive target for terrorists and extremists that seek to undermine the stability of the region. A stable and secure ICI region is of critical importance to NATO. The course, delivered on 11-15 February 2018 was attended by 31 Kuwaiti representatives (12 military and 19 civilians) from 7 different governmental institutions (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, National Guard, Fire Service Directorate, Port Authority, Council of Ministers Security Decisions Follow up Committee and Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority) and 3 oil companies. By training students from governmental agencies and private oil companies to enhance the security and resilience of energy infrastructures in Kuwait, the CEIP Course responded to NATO’s strategic objective to support partner nations, such as ICI countries, in addressing critical infrastructure vulnerabilities. The course was the result of cooperation among various organizations: NATO HQ, NATO School Oberammergau, NATO-ICI Regional Centre, Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), and NATO Energy Security (ENSEC) Centre of Excellence (COE). This SPS activity was led by the NATO School in Oberammergau and Kuwait [SPS ref. G5518]

CBRN FIRST RESPONDERS TRAINING COURSE
The CBRN First Responders Training Course was delivered on 18-22 March 2018 and aimed to ensure that first responders have a common knowledge base and a minimum level of preparedness when responding to CBRN incidents. The course was attended by 29 participants from three ICI countries (Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain) and Saudi Arabia. The CBRN First Responders Training helped first responders from ICI countries improve their current preparedness and enhance capabilities of their emergency response organizations to meet their performance objectives during notification and mitigation of discovered CBRN agents and improvised explosive devices. Hence, this SPS activity helped improve national civil emergency plans, complement national training systems, and build interoperability among first responders of the NATO member and partner countries. This SPS activity was led by the Joint CBRN Defence Centre of Excellence and Kuwait [SPS ref. G5520]