



NATO and its partners become smarter on energy

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Reducing fuel consumption in the military has become an operational imperative: not only can it save money, it will also save soldiers' lives, as well as improve the mobility and endurance of military forces. Enhancing the energy efficiency of the armed forces is one of NATO's priorities in the field of energy security.



Photo by Patricio Soto, courtesy of NATO Advance Research Workshop Sønderborg



The importance of energy efficiency for the conduct of military operations has come to the fore over the past decade. The weight of batteries to power the wide range of electronic equipment used by the military adds a substantial burden to soldiers. Moreover, fuel convoys are vulnerable to attack (it is estimated that 3,000 US soldiers were killed or wounded in attacks on fuel and water convoys in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2003 and 2007).

Progress in the field of energy efficiency relies heavily on working together with like-minded partners. *"Now is the time to start thinking about multinational cooperation: by setting clear priorities; by bringing together groups of interested nations; and by achieving economies of scale. This is why we call it 'smart energy',"* says NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, Ambassador Sorin Ducaru.

What is NATO doing in this area?

At the 2012 Chicago Summit and more recently at the 2014 Wales Summit, Allied leaders agreed that NATO should work *"towards significantly improving the energy efficiency of our military forces"*.

NATO's 'Green Defence' framework, adopted in February 2014, seeks to make NATO more operationally effective through changes in the use of energy, while also meeting the environmental objectives of using less resources and enhancing sustainability.

At NATO, enhancing energy efficiency in the military focuses on reducing the energy consumption of military vehicles and camps, as well as minimising their environmental footprint. Experts are examining existing national initiatives and proposing multinational projects. They are also studying the behavioural aspects of saving energy in exercises and operations, and developing common energy efficiency standards and procedures.

To facilitate information sharing and advance interoperability in the area of energy efficiency NATO set up the 'Smart Energy Team' (SENT) – a group of experts from six Allied and two partner countries. Supported by the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, SENT seeks to identify the best 'smart energy' solutions and to provide recommendations for improving NATO's standards and best practices.

A number of SPS-sponsored activities have helped to generate concrete deliverables. A two-day conference and exhibition in Lithuania in November 2014 focused on the latest energy-saving technologies and provided government representatives with an opportunity to discuss NATO's Smart Energy approach.

In February 2015, a three-day research workshop '*Triple Zero Net Energy, Water and Waste Models Applications*' was held in the Danish city of Sønderborg to look at models that will lead to reduced energy, water and waste footprints. Led by Denmark and Finland, the event gathered over 60 scientists, engineers and high-level government representatives from the United States, Canada and several European countries to address topics ranging from technologies, to decision making and policy.

Katherine Hammack, United States Assistant Secretary of the Army and an engineer by training, emphasised the link between the US Army's Net Zero Programme and security: *"It's operationally necessary, it's fiscally prudent, and it's mission essential for us to make sure that we have energy security and can perform our primary mission for the*

United States."

In the margins of the workshop, participants were also introduced to Sønderborg's 'Project Zero', a private-public partnership of the municipality. They visited modern waste-to-energy and wastewater treatment plants, as well as other energy-efficient installations, such as highly-insulated passive buildings.

Next milestone

More 'smart energy' activities are on their way. The next milestone will be the implementation of energy-saving solutions in the exercise Capable Logistician 2015 that will take place in Hungary, on 8 to 19 June. During the exercise, NATO will bring together private companies that will contribute equipment and expertise for 'smart energy' production, storage, distribution and consumption. Moreover, a SPS workshop will allow public sector experts from ministries of defence and universities to observe the testing of interoperability of equipment and discuss the outcomes, with a view to providing inputs for NATO standards that are needed to ensure interoperability in 'smart energy' solutions.

"2015 has already been declared by experts from the private sector as 'the Smart Energy Year'. Together we will reach out for a mind-set change among all military ranks and decision makers," says Dr Susanne Michaelis, NATO's action officer for smart energy.

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