How to book individual training with the **NCI Academy**

NCI
AGENCY

NATO Communications
and Information Academy

Meeting the global challenge

As the world around us continues to evolve, we strive to stay abreast of developing security challenges and ensure we are always one step ahead. Training and education is critical for the Alliance to keep pace with global challenges. The NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCI Agency) is committed to "Smart Training", which requires a new approach, an evolution from the static hands-on, classroom-based training environment, to one that is more flexible, agile and adaptive.

What the NCI Academy has to offer

The NCI Agency's Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) and Cyber Training Catalogue for 2022 contains more than 200 course offerings. It covers the entire spectrum of NATO-specific C4ISR and cyber security training, including user, administrator and technical training, as well as managerial courses for military and civilian staff working in more general Communications and Information Systems (CIS) posts. The catalogue explains the procedure for seat allocation, the pricing policy and course prices. It includes, for the first time, course relationship diagrams that explain the various paths towards certain qualifications and competence levels.

As you might expect from an agile and responsive organization, the catalogue is a living document. It will be adjusted as the Agency accommodates courses for new systems or new system versions, discontinues courses for systems being phased out, or as changing customer requirements evolve.

Doing business with the NCI Academy

Following direction by the Nations, the NATO Communications and Information Academy (NCI Academy) must be fully customer-funded. Consequently, from 2021 onwards, a formal agreement with the NCI Agency is required for the delivery of all training provided by the NCI Academy.

While requirements planning remains the crucial factor for future education and individual training funding and delivery, the process needs to be supported by a flexible and responsive agreement in the delivery phase to adjust to customer priorities, that may change in the course of the year.

To this end, the NCI Academy has developed the Service Support Training (SST) package. The aim of the SST is to provide required funding and delivery flexibility for both the customer and the provider. It also streamlines the delivery management between the customer and the provider at the lowest eligible decision-making level, which is usually the level of the national or organizational Training Coordinator.

The SST package creates a funding framework, so the customer pays only for the training that is actually reserved. It is compliant with the regular Customer Request Form (CRF) and Price Proposal process used by the NCI Agency and initiated by a regular CRF. The SST covers the yearly training requirements as envisioned when requested, but importantly, it allows for in-year changes by mutual agreement in type and quantity of courses, provided the

customer remains within the overall financial scope of the SST package. Customers are invoiced quarterly for actual training usage, based on standard catalogue course prices.

Each SST package stipulates the requirement for the customer to provide a single Training Coordinator with authority to commit students to training and act as the general focal point for that customer. Once an SST package has been signed, further coordination of training requests and communication on NCI Agency courses takes place directly with the Training Coordinators.

The NCI Academy follows an annual cycle, starting in the first quarter of the year prior to the year of training delivery, where a letter will be sent along with a preliminary pricing sheet, inviting customers to develop their training requirements for the following year. This is known as the 'bidding letter' and this early engagement allows customers to make their budget submissions with reasonably accurate pricing information. In the following months, the customers refine their requirements, while the NCI Academy refines its course offering and prices for the following year. The formalization of the process occurs through the submission of a CRF and the subsequent development of the SST package. It is expected that all SST packages will be signed in the fourth quarter, ready for training to start in January of the following year. Further details on the Annual Training Request Process can be found later in the leaflet.

Clarification of SST management costs
Throughout the transition process, the NCI Academy has received requests for clarification on the management cost, which is included with each SST.

The agreement management cost is charged annually as part of each SST to cover support costs associated with:

- The collection and management of training requests;
- The development and staffing of SST packages;
- Reporting and invoicing.

These costs are similar to those included in every NCI Agency Service Level Agreement (SLA), Service Support Package or Price Proposal, although the nomenclature may vary depending on the type of agreement.

Following analysis of level of effort and resources required for the SST Package management process, the Academy applies 5,000 EUR for the SST management cost. All CRFs go through the same staffing process, no matter the value (a CRF with a value of 10,000 EUR is staffed in the same way as a CRF with a value of 100,000 EUR), so a standard cost was established.

In addition to the staffing and management of the annual agreement, there is additional effort associated with any in-year financial scope changes. This effort is slightly less than for the annual package, so the Academy applies a 3,000 EUR amendment cost for each financial scope change.

It should be noted that as long as the overall financial scope of the SST does not change, then no amendment cost will be incurred. The NCI Agency therefore strongly encourages customers to coordinate and request a single SST package each year to reduce the risk of incurring amendment costs.

List of changes between SST and the past system

What changes:
- A Service Support Training (SST) package is triggered by a Customer Request Form (CRF);

- An SST package creates a direct bridge between the customers' Training Coordinators and the NCI Academy, based on the NCI Academy's terms and conditions. In the past, customers had to go through SLA Managers to enact changes.

- Flexibility:
  » While our customers are still required to validate the initial requirements and budget, the courses listed in the SST package can be changed in-year by mutual agreement. The overall financial scope of the SST package can be increased or decreased as per the customer's request. This not only enables customers to change the training courses and number of attendees, but also to easily shift from commercial to NCI Agency-provided training and vice versa;

  » For any in-year changes to the overall financial scope of the SST package, an amendment of the CRF is required, a revised package will be agreed and an additional 3,000 EUR of agreement amendment cost will be charged.
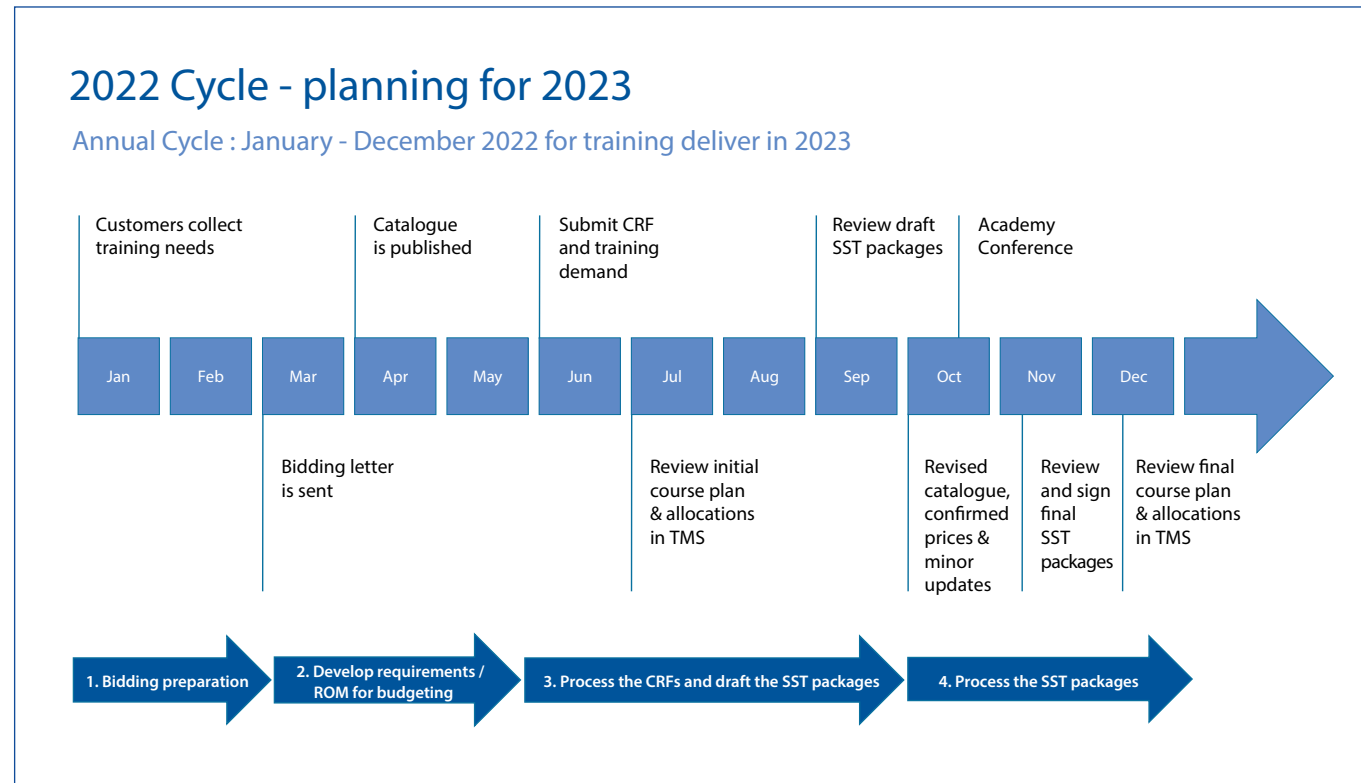
What stays the same:
- Agreements on an annual basis remain. SST packages will be annual agreements, signed by both parties;

- Training costs:

  » Prices are usually available per seat in courses organized at an NCI Agency site (Oeiras, Mons or The Hague);

  » Location of the courses are specified in NCI Agency C4ISR and Cyber Training Catalogue and may be subject to changes by the NCI Agency;

  » For local course iterations at a customer site (also known as Mobile Training Teams (MTT)), different prices are available for sites in European NATO nations and sites in North American NATO nations. Training may also be provided outside of a NATO nation. In such cases, prices will be calculated on request and the Academy may need further authorization.

- Customers will continue to submit CRFs to formally request user training services, and to request in-year changes to the financial scope of SST packages;

- Customer are required to provide a single Training Coordinator who has the mandate to commit seats and local course iterations (MTTs) within the financial scope of the agreement on behalf of the organization;

- Customers will still use the Academy Training Management System (TMS) to document and request courses for planning purposes;

- Students are expected to meet the prerequisites for the courses attended as specified in the NCI Agency C4ISR and Cyber Training Catalogue, including security clearance and language proficiency. The NCI Agency can request proof of meeting the prerequisites. In case the prerequisites are not met, the NCI Agency has the right to deny or discontinue the provision of the course without reimbursement;

- The customer can cancel students' participation through the TMS before the course 'turn back date' without being charged. The standard 'turn back date' is set at six weeks prior to the start all courses (including MTTs). At the 'turn back date', all reserved seat and MTTs are processed for invoicing.

The NCI Academy will provide a report on training delivered with metrics, along with the invoice.

2022 Cycle - planning for 2023

Annual Cycle : January - December 2022 for training deliver in 2023

Customers collect training needs		Catalogue is published		Submit CRF and training demand			Review draft SST packages	Academy Conference			
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		Bidding letter is sent			Review initial course plan & allocations in TMS			Revised catalogue, confirmed prices & minor updates	Review and sign final SST packages	Review final course plan & allocations in TMS	

1. Bidding preparation → 2. Develop requirements / ROM for budgeting → 3. Process the CRFs and draft the SST packages → 4. Process the SST packages

1. Bidding preparations
During this period the NCI Academy will conduct a Curriculum Review Board, review the Catalogue and develop the preliminary course prices for the following year. This period ends with the sending of the Bidding Letter.

2. Develop requirements / Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) for budgeting
With the bidding letter, all customers receive a spreadsheet on which they can indicate training requirements for the following year and in which quarter. The customer will get a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) costs for the following year's training directly in the spreadsheet, which can be used for a budget submission. This period ends with the customer's submission of a CRF (Customer Request Forms) along with the training requirements spreadsheet.

3. Processing the CRFs and drafting the SST packages
During this period, the NCI Academy will process the CRFs, draft SST packages and develop a draft course plan for the following year based on demand. At the same time, the Academy expects to receive final confirmation of the NCI Agency Customer Rates from the Budget Committee, which will allow the Academy to finalize its course prices. This period ends with the Academy sending the final SST packages.

4. Processing the SST packages
This final period before training delivery starts allows time for customers to review their SST packages and discuss any final points at the Academy Conference before signing their SST packages or submitting a Letter of Intent (LoI).

To book individual training,
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Our course catalogue is available at
http://www.ncia.nato.int/training

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