

NATO Lessons Learned Conference 2022

A flashback of two decades of learning to gain insights for the next five years

From 04 to 05 May, the JALLC hosted the NATO Lessons Learned Conference in a hybrid format, broadcasting live presentations and discussions from the studio in Lisbon to the online audience across NATO, its Partners, and beyond. This Factsheet provides a brief summary of the event, more details are available in the First Impression Report and Final Conference Report, both downloadable from the NATO Lessons Learned Portal.

Overview

The 2022 edition of the NATO Lessons Learned (LL) Conference (NLLC22) was a huge success. The live-online hybrid format allowed participants from Allies and Partners to attend presentations and participate in discussions that focussed on the conference theme:

A flashback of two decades of learning to gain insights for the next five years

The theme was intended to draw lessons, best practices, experiences, and good ideas from the past 20 years of learning lessons in order to inform the further implementation of the NATO LL Capability Improvement Roadmap (2021-2025) aimed at ensuring a relevant, resourceful NATO LL Capability for the future.

The conference theme was broken down into four topics that were further addressed in panel format with Key Speakers for each panel setting the scene on the opening day of the conference, and the Panels presenting their key findings to the audience on the closing day.

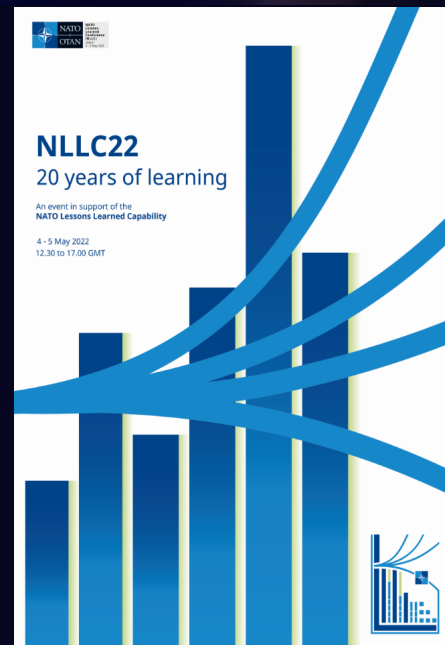
On the next pages you can read more about each topic and the key findings:

- **LL in Support of the Warfare Development Agenda**
- **Innovation in Support of Lessons Learned**
- **Overcoming challenges in learning enduring lessons in Exercises**
- **Overcoming challenges in learning enduring lessons in Operations**



COM JALLC addresses the NLLC22 audience.

Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (DSACT), General Paolo Ruggiero opened the NLLC22 noting that it was an opportunity for the whole LL community to reflect on the past to build for the future. The JALLC's Commander, Brigadier General Bogdan Cernat, noted that in these challenging times, Lessons Learned is more relevant than ever and highlighted the importance of continued improvement of the NATO LL Capability to ensure that the Alliance is ready to face current and future threats.



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Lessons Learned in support of the Warfare Development Agenda

The first Panel of the NLLC22 focused on how LL can support the Warfare Development Agenda. NATO faces persistent competition from multiple actors across multiple domains. The Alliance's Warfare Development Agenda (WDA) is a planning tool to implement the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept, a North Star vision for NATO's future Military Instrument of Power that includes multi-domain operations, resilience, cognitive work and much more. Panel Key Speaker, Major General Guillermo Cavo, Deputy Chief of Staff Joint Force Development, first set the scene for this panel which was followed over the NLLC22 days by intensive and productive panel discussions, culminating in the Key Takeaways.

Key Takeaways:

Updating the NATO LL Policy may provide some ground for a strategic alignment and engagement from the LL perspective across NATO, with Allies, Partners, and other organizations in line with the Warfare Development Imperatives resulting in improved transfer of knowledge / lessons between Allies and NATO Entities.

There is a need to include feedback loops in each WDA Line of Delivery to generate checkpoints that will allow for the capture and sharing of observations, supporting any review and update of the WDA.

Careful consideration should be given to unlearning lessons already learned in the past or current Alliance operating environment, but which may not be applicable to the future operating environment as envisaged with the WDA.

Key Takeaways:

Innovation implies three elements: new technologies, processes, and mindset (as the main driver). But LL staff need to be trained with the right skills to ensure LL innovation is effective.

LL effectiveness is not only about quantity but also about quality and organizational changes leading to improvement.

Lessons coming from projects and use of new technologies within national (e.g. US experience with the next version of their LL system) and multinational collaboration networks (e.g. through the Science and Technology Organization), should be considered during the development of the New NATO LL Toolset.



Innovation in Support of Lessons Learned

The second NLLC22 Panel was aimed at gaining further understanding on how innovation can support Lessons Learned. Since the JALLC hosted the New Technologies Event in 2018, it has remained dedicated to understanding how new technologies can potentially make learning lessons easier and more efficient. The Key Speaker for the second Panel was Dr. Michael Street, Head Innovation and Data Sciences in NATO's Communications and Information Agency, who presented his perspective of how Innovation can support and is supporting Lessons Learned in NATO. The panel worked with both online participants as well as those onsite to develop their Key Takeaways.

Lessons from Exercises: overcoming challenges and shortfalls



Key Takeaways:

The NATO LL Process does not always allow for the time needed to do LL during an exercise and initiating the NATO LL Process for relevant observations.

Reviewing the key NATO Exercise planning and reporting documents may provide the opportunity to innovate, adapt and apply lessons, so that exercise design can ensure prioritization and collection of observations during an exercise.

Innovative ways to show that LL is an opportunity to improve the way NATO works, rather than an extra reporting burden, may serve to improve the quality of LL in exercise reporting.

The panel that looked at lessons from exercises focussed on identifying the challenges and shortfalls from learning lessons before, during, and after an exercise and how they can be overcome as well as how lessons can be better used to improve exercise design. The main constraint identified relates to competing time lines and priorities between the Exercise Reporting Process and the NATO LL Process. Key Speaker Air Commodore Adrian Hill, DCOS Spt, HQ AIRCOM, reminded the audience of why NATO conducts exercises, highlighting some known challenges and potential solutions to set the scene for the panel discussions that resulted in the Key Takeaways.

Lessons from Operations: overcoming challenges and shortfalls



The subjects discussed by the panel touched upon: the changing nature of NATO operations, applying the NATO LL Process in operations, leadership and LL mind-set, and LL information sharing. Key Speaker Major General Boga Ribeiro noted that the last 20 years of NATO operations focused on a wide variety of the lower end of conflict intensity core tasks and types of operations and that the immediate future for NATO will require preparation for more complex, wide, intense and fast operational environments. The panel then prepared their Key Takeaways based on the discussion covering a range of related topics.

Key Takeaways:




























This potential future reality of faster-paced, intense conflict, should perhaps result in the need to reconsider the way NATO LL Capability is employed in operations such as ensuring the continuous collection of observations throughout the duration of the operation and not only during after action reviews.

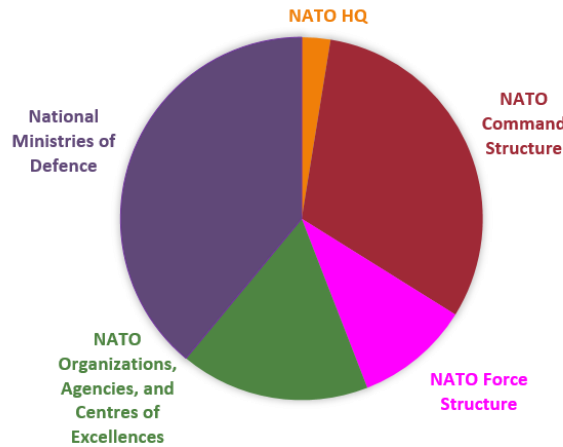
Providing LL training, advertising successful LL stories, standardization, and incorporating new technologies in LL tools appear suitable ways to overcome barriers to LL information sharing relating to mindset, interoperability, and technical issues.

In operations, a LL mindset and timely implementation of remedial actions are critical factors for the mission success.

NLLC22 @ a Glance

317 registered participants
22 Entities
29 Nations
One Conference

Albania	1	
Belgium	5	
Bulgaria	6	
Canada	9	
Croatia	4	
Czech Republic	17	
Denmark	2	
Estonia	1	
France	10	
Germany	16	
Greece	11	
Hungary	9	
Italy	25	
Latvia	4	
Lithuania	8	
Netherlands	9	
Norway	5	
Poland	16	
Portugal	23	
Romania	24	
Slovakia	2	
Slovenia	3	
Spain	25	
Türkiye	21	
United Kingdom	23	
United States	34	
Partner Nations	4	



What is the NLLC about?

Learned calendar, bringing together participants from NATO and National entities, developing a stronger NATO Lessons Learned community. This event provides participants with the opportunity for the exchange of information within the NATO Lessons Learned community and stimulates discussions on best and suitable practices for improving the current NATO Lessons Learned Capability, enabling the continuous transformation of the Alliance. The NATO Lessons Learned Conference is also an opportunity to engage with Partners and representatives from industry and academia to share insights on innovation and relevant new technologies. Conference recommendations are processed by the JALLC and fed into the NATO Lessons Learned Process via the NLLP where they are monitored and actioned, contributing to the Alliance's Transformation.

Since 2003, the JALLC has hosted the annual NATO Lessons Learned Conference, which has become an important event in NATO's Lessons