

# TABLE OF CONTENTS













 About Us	2
 Welcome from the STCU Governing Board Chair	4
 Executive Director Statement	6
 Highlights and Accomplishments	8
 From Europe to Ukraine: The Journey of Explosive Detection Dogs	10
 Nuclear Security Through Cooperation: Highlights from STCU's 2023 Initiatives	11
 Seismic Synergy: STCU and ISTC Team Up to Protect Central Asia and The Caucasus	12
 CBRN CoE Project 088 Transitions from Theory to Practice	14
 Defending Facts: U.S. Funds Boost Ukraine's Battle Against Russian Nuclear Disinformation	16
 From Tokyo to Krakow: STCU's Commitment to the GP and ISI	18
 Financial Activity in 2023	20
Contact Information	24

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#### **ABOUT US**

### 2023 STCU ANNUAL REPORT

#### **HISTORY**

- The Science and Technology Center in Ukraine (STCU) is an intergovernmental organization with diplomatic status whose Parties use science and technology engagement and cooperation to promote international security and well-being. The STCU was established by international agreement in October 1993. The current Parties to the STCU are Azerbaijan, the European Union, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and the United States.
- STCU activities fall in two broad categories: Research Projects, which employ scientists in the development of new science and technology (S&T) and Supplemental Programs, which include workshops, training, and other events to integrate scientists into the global S&T and industrial community. Over the past 28 years, the STCU has been active with over 21,000 scientists in more than 1,000 research institutes and universities engaged in STCU projects and activities, primarily across the GUAM countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova).
- The STCU is headquartered in Kyiv, Ukraine and currently has three branch offices in Tbilisi, Chisinau, and Baku.

#### **FUTURE**

- The Center is developing new targeted programs and activities in response to member countries' needs and priorities.
- The Center continues to investigate and engage new sources of funding for R&D projects and programs.
- The STCU is expanding synergistic cooperation with the EU's CBRN Centres of Excellence (COEs) and other governmental initiatives to support regional and local priorities.

Party	Amount Total in Millions of USD (1995-2023)			
European Union	\$121.40			
United States of Am	erica \$81.92			
Canada	\$10.17			
Japan	\$1.04			
Sweden	\$1.67			
Government Partner	rs \$116.64			
Non-Government Pa	artners \$67.39			
Total	\$400.23			













#### **STRENGTHS**

- More than 28 years of experience funding and managing multi-national R&D projects and activities.
- A network of hundreds of institutes/universities and thousands of scientists with expertise in many fields, including biotechnology, material science, physics, and nuclear safety.
- Transparency in operations, as well as best practices in procedures to allow the Center to effectively manage more than \$400 million dollars of funded projects and activities.
- Full-service project planning and execution with on-site monitoring and audits.
- STCU's International agreement allows cost-effective operations within STCU partner countries as the Center is not required to pay any local duties and taxes.

#### VISION

To advance global peace and prosperity through cooperative Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation by supporting civilian science and technology partnerships and collaboration that address global security threats and advance non-proliferation.

#### MISSION

- To address the global security threat of the proliferation of WMD-applicable chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear knowledge and materials;
- To support the integration of scientists with WMD applicable knowledge into global scientific and economic communities through national, regional, and international research collaboration;
- To develop and sustain a culture of nonproliferation and CBRN security awareness and responsibility through education, mentorship, and training;
- To promote international best practices and security culture to mitigate CBRN security threats.

STCU 1995-2023



\$400M USD total funding



2,300+ projects



21,000+ scientists and researchers



346 International Partners



artwork elements by

Mariana DORICHENKO

Ukraine

#### **WELCOME**

# WELCOME FROM THE STCU GOVERNING BOARD CHAIRPERSON



Chair of the Governing Board of the STCU

We are now in year three of the war. Despite these deadly efforts, deployed by the Russian army and its mercenaries, Ukraine is resisting and paying a terrible price to resist against the aggression. The western countries bring the urgently needed supply of humanitarian aid, political support and unfortunately insufficiently weapons and arms.

In these difficult times the STCU staff remained at work, projects have continued and new ones are starting and others planned. The staff had to undergo repeated alerts and blackouts, working often in the middle of the winter without heating in the offices. One quarter of the staff is still outside the country but all worked 100%, even more.

Be sure that we appreciate all your efforts and sacrifices and the risk you take every day to make the STCU working and supporting Ukraine. Your dedication to your task also helps Georgia and Moldova and all the STCU partners in achieving the objectives of their projects.

I am proud to be the chairman of your STCU board and as Chair of the STCU, I also would like to congratulate the International Science and Technology Centre, and in particular the Chairman of its board Ron Lehman and the Secretariat, for its 30th birthday celebrated this early June in Astana. Both centres are cooperating for peaceful science, non-proliferation and helping partner countries to implement solid measures to control strategic trade control regulations.

Happy Birthday ISTC.

Let us come back to our STCU business. Despite the difficulties in the daily work of STCU, the year 2023 was a record year in funding; \$34.1 million were planned by the major Parties. The EU alone provided \$26.3 million. The US and the EU continued with other partners and countries to support Ukraine.

But the war also has negative effects on projects. Non-Government projects are ending, no new projects are planned. Only few Government partners joined the STCU in recent months which may result in a scarce funding in the coming period. The Russian army bombed intensively the city of Kharkiv, damaging many of our partners facilities, many scientists had to go fighting against the aggressors.

When this terrible war finally stops, we will probably discover that many investments STCU and the Parties in general have done in Ukraine have been damaged. In Kharkiv, Kiev, Odessa, Zaporizhia, where the National Training Centre I had the chance to launch on behalf of the European Commission with Energoatom has been bombed, equipment stolen and we heard that most probably two staff members have been killed. Many employees of the nuclear power plant have suffered during the attack of the NPP; many were injured or disappeared. Let us hope that they all will recover or are hidden somewhere.











We should also keep a sharp eye on the situation on Moldova and Georgia where destabilisation activities are ongoing.

Let me finish this brief address by referring to a magnificent American poet who inspired so many writers in Europe, Edgar Alan Poe. He impressed me when I was still at school (a long time ago). Remember the last paragraph of his novel <sup>1</sup>.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued: for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the "House of P....\*."

\*: not in the original text

God bless Ukraine and all STCU partner countries.



artwork elements by

Mariana DORICHENKO

Ukraine

1 Edgar Allan Poe: The Fall of the House of Usher; 1839 in Burton's Gentleman's Magazine

# 2022 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STATEMENT



Curtis "B.J." Bjelajac Executive Director

February 24, 2024 (Day 731)

As I did last year, I again sit down to write the ED statement for the previous year's annual report on the anniversary of Russian's invasion of Ukraine. It's a Saturday. Two years have passed. If "time flies when you're having fun", I can say from experience that "time creeps forward, sleep-deprived, during war". Despite the slow pace of

time, 2023 marched on and brought with it not only tough times, but also an important anniversary and significant funding milestones. On October 25, 2023, the STCU celebrated the thirty (30) year anniversary of the signing of the STCU Agreement. One week before that anniversary, on October 18th, 2023, the STCU's 57th Governing Board approved a funding sheet that pushed STCU over the \$400M in cumulative project funding, as well as made 2023 the largest year of funding in the Center's history. All the aforementioned points are reasons to celebrate, and I will go into more detail about these impressive milestones later in this text; however, the unfortunate truth is that for all of us close to Ukraine (including the entire STCU team), 2023 was extremely difficult.

The start of 2023 was cold and dark in Ukraine, as the Russian military did its best to turn off the lights and heat in January and February 2023. Miraculously, Ukrainian energy workers (Ukraine's population is not short of heroes, both military and civilian) were able to continuously repair the damage wreaked by the Russian Federation's missiles and drones so that the lights stayed on long enough (there were scheduled blackouts) so that STCU could continue its operations in Kyiv. Of course, the remainder of 2023 was filled with the wailing of air raid sirens (next month Kyiv is scheduled to reach the unfathomable milestone of 1,000 air raid alerts since the start of the war), and many sleepless nights, making the work environment in Ukraine extremely challenging. For those in the Eastern part of Ukraine, closer to the Russian Federation (Kharkiv, Sumy, etc.), the

shelling and air raid alerts have almost been non-stop. Our friends in Kharkiv are living through a nightmare right now - and we are constantly thinking of them.

Despite the war, rolling blackouts, and intermittent heating the STCU continued its operations with 2023 seeing a record \$34.1M in new project funding, surpassing the previous record year of funding (2021 = \$24.5M) by almost 40%. A very large part (almost two-thirds) of 2023's record funding (~€20.4M, equal to ~\$22.1M) was provided by our friends at the European Commission's DG-International Partnerships, formerly a part of DG-DEVCO, under their Instrument for International Nuclear Safety and Cooperation. The funds were provided in order to remediate the disastrous effects of the almost six-week long occupation of the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone (ChEZ) by Russian Federation troops, as well as to enhance the safety of the zone. With the European Commission taking the lead in the ChEZ, it wasn't long before other international partners looked to leverage the EC's leadership and provide their own resources to contribute to the safety and security of the ChEZ. As a result of the semi-annual meetings in 2023 of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction Working Group, the leadership of Canada (\$3.2M), Norway (~\$2.7M), the United Kingdom (\$605K), and the United States (\$1.8M) all decided to join in this effort via the STCU, resulting in the largest multidonor project (~\$30.4M) in STCU's history. The STCU is grateful to the leadership of these countries for showing the confidence in our organization to execute in a manner that warrants these record levels of funding. I am confident that our team will not let them down.

Aside from the ChEZ funding above, the STCU also received project funding from our colleagues at the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments to continue the hard work ongoing in the Center of Excellence (CoE) project #P088 (~€1.1M = ~\$1.2M) with the objective of strengthening CBRN Medical Preparedness and Response Capabilities in the Southeast and Eastern Europe (SEEE) region, as well as to start a new project with the centennial CoE number of P100 (~€2.2M = ~\$2.4M) which will strengthen front line biosafety and biosecurity measures in the same region. As evidenced by the ChEZ projects discussed above and these two CBRN CoE projects, project funding at the STCU was extremely robust in 2023.













In addition to a historic year in project funding, our colleagues at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for International Security and Non-Proliferation (ISN) also guickly launched multiple fellowship programs (both at the individual and organization level) to help alleviate the hardships faced by many of our friends in the Ukrainian scientific community. In total, ISN launched three projects that will provide over \$2.7M in fellowships during the final months of 2022 and all of 2023, including \$300K for five (5) projects focused on countering the ongoing disinformation campaign conducted by the Russian Federation against the STCU and its Parties. Our friends at ISN are not finished, as I was just informed that an additional \$622K of fellowship funding would come online in March 2023. Who says governments can't move fast! We thank our colleagues at ISN for their swiftness of action and confidence in the STCU to get these fellowships implemented quickly, so as to help our Ukrainian colleagues to continue their important work.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize two Board members who left us during 2023. First, Mr. Oleksii Shkuratov who took over the Ukrainian leadership position in September 2021 and helped the STCU navigate the very difficult first year of the war. Second, Ms. Natalie Pauwels who took over the EU's leadership position in late March 2021, helping the Center to navigate the tail end of the COVID-19 situation as well as the start of the war in February 2022. The good news in relation to Ms. Pauwels is that we hope to still see her in the future as she is now a key member of the European Commission's DG NEAR team that is tasked with implementing the €50 Billion of assistance to Ukraine approved just a few weeks back on Feb. 1, 2024. On behalf of the entire STCU Secretariat I would like to wish both Mr. Shkuratov and Ms. Pauwels all the best in their future endeavors.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the devastating news of the passing in 2023 of one of STCU's most beloved team members – Marianna Dorichenko. The woman I affectionately called "Babulya" (grandmother) was a giant personality, packed in a petite, but powerful package. Marianna was one of the very first hires at the STCU, starting her career with us back in 1995 – the year STCU commenced operations. Marianna's impact on the Center went far beyond her day-to-day work, as she was in large part the spiritual inspiration and matriarch of the STCU team, always bringing a smile to everyone's face with her gregarious nature and amazing skills as an artist. Marianna was at heart both an artist (her mother and father are both

famous Ukrainian artists) and a warrior (she spent her non-STCU waking hours helping the Ukrainian military). She labored tirelessly to create beautiful works of art, which were sold to raise money, which in turn she used to make ointments that both protected against and healed wounds caused by extreme cold and wind, thereby supporting the Ukrainian army, and in turn defending the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. Some say that the Amazon warrior women of Greek legend were Ukrainian (legend has it they lived near the Black Sea), and if true, then Marianna was the modern-day version of these warrior princesses creative, fearless, and strong.

Marianna is survived by a loving family – including her son Andrii, his wife Natalia, and the two centers of her universe, also known as her two grandsons - Maksym and Hordii. There are countless others, including the STCU team, that will miss her every day going forward. The beautiful artwork that adorns this annual report is hers. Thank you Babulya, you always made us smile.



artwork elements by

Mariana DORICHENKO

# 2023 Highlights and Accomplishments

In 2023, the STCU achieved numerous milestones and noteworthy accomplishments, reinforcing its role as a pivotal organization in promoting scientific collaboration and enhancing security. These achievements underscore our commitment to advancing global peace, security, and scientific progress. Below, we highlight four significant events that exemplify the STCU's impact throughout the year.

#### 1. The 57th Governing Board Meeting

On October 18, 2023, the Fifty-Seventh Meeting of the Governing Board of the STCU convened in a hybrid format, with participants gathering both in Brussels, Belgium, and virtually. This landmark meeting saw the approval of three new government-funded projects totaling €18,854,300 and the confirmation of four new Partner Projects valued at \$2,722,626. Additionally, ten Partner Project contract extensions worth \$2,531,504 were confirmed. The 57th Governing Board meeting marked the largest single-year funding approval in STCU history, with a total of \$40.1M, surpassing the previous record of \$24.5M set in 2021. This remarkable funding support from the European Union and the United States highlights their steadfast commitment to Ukraine amid ongoing challenges.

Furthermore, the U.S. Party provided an additional \$1,432,000 to continue its Scientist Engagement Fellowship Program for displaced Ukrainian scientists and partner institutes. The meeting also approved the 2024 Administrative Operating Budget, Supplemental Budget requests from the STCU Secretariat, and the 2022 Annual Report. These actions reflect the ongoing dedication to fostering scientific advancements and supporting Ukraine's resilience.



57th STCU Governing Board convened on October 18, '23 in Brussels

# 2. Remote Workshop for Ukrainian Nuclear Experts: "Series on SMR Site Characterization"



STCU started work with the FIRST program in January 2022

In March 2023, STCU conducted a remote workshop entitled "Series on SMR Site Characterization" for Ukrainian nuclear experts and scientists. This three-day event, held from March 21st to 23rd, was part of the U.S. Foundational Infrastructure for the Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology (FIRST) program. The workshop aimed to support Ukraine's strategy in small modular reactor (SMR) site characterization by providing comprehensive training on regulatory, technical, and safety aspects of SMR siting.

Participants from the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine, State Scientific and Technical Center for Nuclear and Radiation Safety, and other Ukrainian agencies engaged in sessions covering fundamental siting principles, regulatory frameworks, transition from coal to nuclear energy, cost evaluations, security considerations, and environmental impacts. The workshop featured U.S. experts and included a detailed case study on the Hanford siting experience, as well as an overview of the Siting Tool for Advanced Nuclear Development (STAND). This initiative played a crucial role in equipping Ukrainian nuclear experts with the knowledge needed to identify, assess, and license appropriate sites for SMRs, ensuring safe and secure nuclear energy development.

# 3. Successful Completion of EU Project on Nuclear Safeguards in Serbia

On June 27, 2023, the European Commission and the Public Company Nuclear Facilities of Serbia (PC NFS) celebrated the successful completion of an EU-funded project on nuclear safeguards at a press conference in Vinča, Belgrade. This project, managed by the STCU, aimed to enhance Serbia's capabilities in nuclear material accountancy, control, and transport, with a €2.43M EU contribution.













The project equipped PC NFS with instruments for detection, identification and characterization of nuclear materials, as well as equipment related to its transport, storage, and safety. The equipment included a gamma detector, a laboratory HPGE spectrometer, a gamma camera, handheld HPGE spectrometers, CZT spectrometers, alpha spectrometers, radioisotope identifiers, multi-purpose digital survey meters, neutron dosimeters, neutron spectrometers, X-ray fluorescence spectrometer, glove-boxes, transport and storage containers, and a vehicle for the transportation of nuclear or other radioactive materials.



Participants of Celebration of Nuclear Safeguards project in Vinča,

The European Commission through its International Nuclear Safety Cooperation instrument (INSC) supports the promotion of nuclear safety culture and radiation protection, the safe management of nuclear spent fuels and radioactive wastes, and the application of effective and efficient safeguards of nuclear materials around the world. Nuclear safeguards, as mandated by the UN Non-Proliferation Treaty and the EURATOM Treaty, play a crucial role in ensuring that nuclear materials are not diverted from civil use and thus prevent unauthorized or malicious use.



Equipment provided as part of the INSC-funded project

The project resulted in significant improvements in measurements, inventory, and control of nuclear materials at the Vinča site, aligning with best practices of the European Union. Key deliverables included state-of-theart instruments, infrastructure upgrades, and personnel training. The new capabilities are expected to strengthen

Serbia's nuclear safeguards and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The project exemplifies the collaborative efforts of the European Commission, Serbian authorities, and academic institutions in bolstering nuclear safety and security in the region.

Serbia as a member of the INSC has benefited a great deal from the instrument and will continue its close cooperation with the EU in promoting global nuclear safety. Under the instrument so far, the European Commission has financed projects in Serbia for more than €4.7M.

# 4. Graduation of the First Cohort from the MA Program in "Global Politics and Security Studies"

July 31, 2023, marked the graduation of the first cohort from the Master's Program in "Global Politics and Security



Studies" at Caucasus International University (CIU) in Tbilisi, Georgia. This program, launched in March 2021 as part of a joint project between STCU and CIU, produced its first batch of graduates specializing in CBRN Non-Proliferation Policy.

CIU Logo

The program, supported by the European Union Targeted Initiative on Export Controls of Dual-Use Materials and Technologies, aims to equip students with expertise in global security and non-proliferation. The inaugural graduates, evaluated by a distinguished panel of experts, completed their theses on critical topics such as CBRN terrorism, WDM proliferation, and cybersecurity. The success of this program, endorsed by the 2023 Vilnius NATO Summit Communique, highlights the significant strides made in promoting strategic stability and combating CBRN threats. The program continues to attract students globally, contributing to the development of highly skilled professionals in security studies.

# Despite a very Difficult Year in 2022... STCU Bounced Back in 2023

These highlights and achievements represent just a fraction of the impactful work carried out by the Science and Technology Center in Ukraine (STCU) in 2023. Each event underscores our commitment to fostering international collaboration, enhancing security, and advancing scientific knowledge. As we look forward to the future, the STCU remains dedicated to driving innovation and promoting global peace and security through science and technology.

# From Europe to Ukraine: The Journey of Explosive Detection Dogs

As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022, thousands of mines and other explosive threats are left scattered across a contaminated land area equivalent to Austria, Denmark, and The Netherlands



Handover ceremony in Nowy Sacz, Poland

together. This leaves Ukraine with the unprecedented challenge of sweeping clean this extensive area, which accounts for more than 30% of its territory. In response to this monumental task, the European Commission initiated a project to assist Ukraine, focusing on training and providing explosive detection and mine-sniffing dogs to Ukrainian officials. This project is led by the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) and operates in close collaboration with the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), the EC's designated entity for managing the STCU.

Experts from the DG HOME reached out to key partners in Belgium and Poland who were instrumental in the implementation of this project - the Belgian military and the Carpathian Unit of the Polish Border Guard. Both provided appropriate training grounds simulating the areas of intervention in Ukraine for the dogs to be trained. Together, DG HOME and FPI coordinated with the police and military services of EU Member States, U.S. authorities, and Ukrainian agencies—including the Armed Forces, the State Emergency Service, and the Border Guard—to select, train, and deploy these specialized canine units.

In October 2022, the inaugural group of nine dogs was selected for training with professional trainers in locations throughout the EU (Belgium, Finland, Malta, etc.). The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), through the STCU, funded the purchase of the dogs, while the DG HOME

covered costs of the dog trainer services, travel, and other related expenses. The chosen dogs were of medium-sized breeds known for their agility, including Dutch and Belgian Shepherds, breeds that are traditionally favored for such tasks. This cohort completed their training by mid-February 2023, culminating in a gathering at the Polish Border Guard Base in Nowy Sacz for an intensive two-week final session. It was here that the mine detection dogs were matched with their Ukrainian handlers. A formal ceremony on the 3rd of March 2023 marked the transition, where the nine expertly trained explosive detection and mine detection dogs were officially entrusted to the Ukrainian Armed Forces and their Humanitarian Demining Battalion. After the ceremony, the dogs and handlers immediately deployed to Ukraine to assist in clearing explosives from agricultural lands, urban environments, and rural areas.

Following the success of the first batch of trained dogs, FPI and DG Home immediately teamed up again with the STCU to train another batch of dogs. This effort culminated on the 9th of November 2023, when another handover ceremony took place at the Polish Border Guard base in Nowy Sacz, during which an additional batch of nine newly trained explosive and mine detection dogs were delivered to the Ukrainian Armed Forces and their Humanitarian Demining Battalion. The ceremony again capped off a final two-week training, during which the mine detection dogs were paired with their Ukrainian dog handlers and again deployed to Ukraine to start work.

Given the success of the first two batches of dogs, FPI and DG Home agreed to fund a third batch of twelve dogs (which would bring the total to thirty) which will be trained in the initial months of 2024 and are slated to be handed over to their Ukrainian partners in June 2024.



Ready for duty and soon to be Deployed to Ukraine"

# Nuclear Security Through Cooperation: Highlights from STCU's 2023 Initiatives

The STCU has been at the forefront of nuclear forensics in the GUAM region, comprising Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, for well over a decade. Since its inception in 2009, with the first Nuclear Forensics Experts' Workshop held in Tbilisi, Georgia, STCU has been dedicated to enhancing nuclear forensic capabilities across this vital area. The Nuclear Forensics Targeted Initiative, launched in 2011, has seen substantial progress and collaboration, supported by approximately \$7.2M in funding from the European Union, the United States Department of State, the U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA), and the Government of Ukraine.

In 2023, STCU continued its tradition of advancing nuclear forensics with two significant events that underscored its commitment to regional cooperation and capacity building.

# **GUAM Regional Workshop: Strengthening Nuclear Forensics Capabilities**

From September 11-12, 2023, STCU hosted the GUAM Regional Workshop entitled "Signatures of Nuclear and other Radioactive Materials and Use of Nuclear Forensics Information Systems" in Baku, Azerbaijan. This event was a pivotal moment in regional cooperation among the GUAM countries. The workshop, part of STCU project 9914 "Information-driven support to nuclear forensic interpretation," aimed to enhance nuclear forensic capabilities and foster collaboration.

The primary objective of the workshop was to demonstrate the practicality and investigative value of the National Nuclear Forensics Library (NNFL) and the Regional Nuclear Forensics Information System (RNFIS) within the GUAM countries. Participants from Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova engaged in realistic scenarios based on actual nuclear forensic investigations. Each team showcased how they utilized their respective NNFL, RNFIS, and the NNFLs of partner countries to advance their nuclear forensic investigations.

The workshop highlighted the importance of regional collaboration in addressing nuclear security challenges. It provided valuable insights into the actions needed to consolidate these processes at both national and regional levels, setting a model for other regions worldwide. The GUAM countries' joint efforts demonstrated the efficiency of their nuclear forensic informational systems and underscored the benefits of fruitful regional cooperation.

## Nuclear Forensics Summer School: Cultivating the Next Generation of Experts

Following the workshop, STCU, in collaboration with the "National Nuclear Research Center" (NNRC) of Azerbaijan, hosted the second edition of the Nuclear Forensics Summer School from September 13-15, 2023. This event was supported by joint funding from the European Union and the U.S. DOE/NNSA, aiming to ignite students' passion for nuclear forensics and foster regional collaboration.

The summer school brought together 21 students from GUAM countries, providing them with the unique opportunity to learn from experts in nuclear forensics laboratories across the GUAM region, JRC Karlsruhe, and U.S. national laboratories. The program included lectures, technical visits, demonstrations, and hands-on exercises covering scientific aspects, operational considerations, and real case studies.

This event significantly impacted both students and regional collaboration. It not only raised awareness of nuclear forensics but also facilitated the formation of a regional network among young researchers. These connections are expected to serve as a vital support network for the emerging generation of nuclear forensics experts in the GUAM region.

#### **Looking Ahead**

The STCU remains committed to advancing nuclear forensics and fostering international cooperation. The success of the GUAM Regional Workshop and the Nuclear Forensics Summer School in 2023 highlights the importance of collaboration and capacity building in ensuring nuclear security. STCU looks forward to continuing its work on this crucial subject, contributing to the safety and security of the region and the world.



GUAM Logo

# Seismic Synergy: STCU and ISTC Team Up to Protect Central Asia and The Caucasus

Central Asia and the Caucasus are earthquake territories. The International Science and Technology Center (ISTC) and the STCU are cooperating to support seismic safety in this large geographic area.

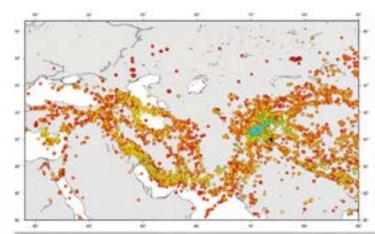
Countries in these regions are in one of the world's most seismically active tectonic zones. Between 1900 and 2020, more than 5.000 earthquakes with a magnitude of 5.0 or greater were recorded from Turkey east to the Himalayas. Earthquakes do not have national boundaries, and effective national-level monitoring and response is strengthened by regional engagement and trans-border cooperation. From the devastating guake in Turkmenistan in 1948, which caused over 100,000 casualties, to the 1966 quake in Uzbekistan to the Spitak quake in Armenia that killed 25,000 in 1988, to the early 2023 temblor in central Turkey and Western Syria and, most recently, the quake on the China-Kyrgyzstan border which shook as far away as Almaty, countries adjacent to and in Central Asia and the Caucasus experience one of the world's most seismically active tectonic zones, known as the Alpine-Himalayan orogeny, or mountain formation.

Earthquake preparation and response is a way of life for diverse cultures in different countries in this region. Through the Seismic Network Expansion in the Caucasus and Central Asia, or SNECCA, project across Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, the ISTC and the STCU collaborate with prestigious research and government organizations to strengthen seismic monitoring and earthquake response in Central Asia and the Caucasus by expanding seismic networks with high-quality broadband equipment and strong motion sites.



Delivery of materials to a hard-to-reach area

With a budget of just over \$5 million in funding through the United States Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration and in collaboration with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Michigan State University, and the EarthScope Consortium, the SNECCA project offers best-practice training and technical support for site selection, installation, and operation to address national seismic monitoring in six countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. SNECCA also cost-effectively deployed seismic monitoring equipment, which was tax-free.



ISC catalog M > 5 ~ 10,000 events

Map showing seismic activity in Central Asia and the Caucasusa













## SNECCA commenced in September of 2018 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The multi-year project includes the installation of over 50 strategically placed broadband seismic sensors in the six Central Asia and Caucasus countries to enhance seismic monitoring capabilities in the region. But earthquakes are just one natural phenomenon SNECCA addresses. More than 20 additional semi-broadband stations have been set up to monitor volcanoes and mud volcanic objects at local levels. In major cities, autonomous strong-motion sensors were also deployed to provide further insight into ground motion, which helps monitor earthquakes and volcanoes. In addition to the participating nations in SNECCA, real-time data from the new seismic stations is available to the global scientific community.

The SNECCA project contributes to modernizing each participating country's server systems, which ensures rapid transition, collection, and processing of seismic data whose utility depends on equipment quality, infrastructure, and location. Project teams meticulously identify suitable sites for permanent stations installation. For each station, the



Solar panels needed to power seismic stations



project team conducts thorough assessments of seismic noise sources and local geological properties, utilizing existing geological maps to aid evaluations. Some maps were initially available only in paper format, prompting teams to organize several training sessions to digitize them. GIS systems, specifically ArcGIS, were provided to each collaborating team that supported one another in installing the seismic stations.

Project implementation allows for significant improvements in seismic monitoring systems, strong motion networks, and regional data processing for earthquake studies. Earthquakes and mountain building are phenomena without national boundaries and necessitate cross-border cooperation. Participation in the SNECCA project enables each country to enhance its monitoring capabilities by incorporating data from neighboring regions. This maximizes analytical output by including data recorded at varying distances from earthquakes. Accurately determining the epicenter of an earthquake is crucial for both response efforts and assessing its severity, and real-time data sharing among countries enhances the precision of earthquake location in border areas, enabling neighboring governments to collaborate on effective rapid response strategies. Real-time data exchange enhances seismic data by promoting widespread data utilization and identifying and resolving quality issues. Importantly, data sharing fosters regional awareness and joint responses to regional earthquake threats.



Truck used for boring a hole and installing a station

# CBRN CoE Project 088 Transitions from Theory to Practice

#### Background: 2021 and 2022 Achievements

STCU launched the EU CBRN CoE Project 088 in 2021, aimed at strengthening CBRN Medical Preparedness and Response Capabilities in SEEE countries. Funded by the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instrument, this project focuses on enhancing emergency medical training and preparedness for CBRN incidents across the region.

# 2021 and 2022 Achievements put the STCU in position for 2023

- Fact-Finding Missions: Conducted in all ten (10)
   SEEE countries assessed the baseline status of CBRN
   emergency medical preparedness and response
   capabilities.
- Established a List of Training Centers: Discussions
  with national authorities led to a list of designated
  training centers and master trainers for CBRN
  emergency medical training.
- 1st Regional Technical Working Group Meeting: Held in June 2022 in Istanbul, where the following were approved:
- CBRN Emergency Medicine (EM) Training Modules
- CBRN EM Standing Operational Procedures
- Master Trainer Candidate Specifications
- Equipment lists for each partner country
- Conducted bilateral meetings to discuss specific needs and next steps

#### Key Activities in 2023

#### **Deliveries and Enhancements in Medical Infrastructure**

CBRN Emergency Ambulances to North Macedonia and Montenegro

In 2023, the STCU successfully delivered specialized CBRN emergency ambulances to North Macedonia and Montenegro, marking significant milestones in enhancing these countries' medical response capabilities. These ambulances, equipped with state-of-the-art medical technologies and specialized equipment, are designed to handle CBRN emergencies effectively, providing immediate medical support and ensuring the safety and well-being of affected individuals.

In North Macedonia, the Public Health Institution received the ambulance, underscoring the EU's commitment to improving national and regional training institutions and National Emergency Medical Service providers. Similarly, in Montenegro, the ambulance was dedicated to the Institute for Emergency Medicine, bolstering the capacity of the Disaster and Emergency Medical Training Center. These efforts highlight the importance of collaborative initiatives in building robust healthcare infrastructure and response mechanisms.



New Ambulance for the Inst. for Emergency Medicine of Montenegro

#### **Training and Capacity Building**

Regional Technical Working Group Meeting in Tirana, Albania

The P88 Regional Technical Working Group meeting held from May 22 to 24, 2023, in Tirana, Albania, brought together CBRN emergency medicine experts from several SEEE countries. The meeting focused on reviewing the progress of Project P088, organizing national training courses, and planning regional field and hospital CBRN Emergency Medicine Exercises.

Participants discussed the organization and logistics support for multi-profession training and the implementation of regional mass-casualty tabletop exercises. These discussions were crucial for enhancing coordination and response mechanisms in the event of mass-casualty incidents involving CBRN substances. The meeting underscored the importance of collaboration, knowledge sharing, and comprehensive preparedness strategies in the field of CBRN emergency medicine.

National CBRN Emergency Medicine Training in Georgia

From September 20 to 22, 2023, the STCU, in collaboration with the LEPL Emergency Situation Coordination and Urgent Assistance Centre in Tbilisi, organized the National CBRN Emergency Medicine Training in Georgia. This training aimed to equip various key personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively respond to CBRN emergencies.



Georgian CBRN emergency medical responders

The training targeted first-line responders, hospital management staff, para-medical personnel, and medical professionals. Participants engaged in hands-on exercises and scenario-based simulations to simulate real-life emergency situations, fostering knowledge exchange and enhancing their preparedness for CBRN incidents. This initiative, funded by the European Commission, emphasized the importance of building a coordinated response system in Georgia.

#### International Collaboration and Future Initiatives

Study Visit and Regional Exercise Planning in Oslo

From November 27 to December 1, 2023, the STCU played a key role in two significant events held in Oslo. The first was a study visit to the CBRNE seminar for physicians, health preparedness personnel, and first responders, hosted by the Norwegian National Unit for CBRNE Medicine at Oslo University Hospital. This seminar provided a platform for representatives from nine SEEE countries to exchange knowledge and insights on CBRN medical preparedness and response.

The second event was the P88 regional exercise planning meeting, where participants collaboratively formed the exercise management team. This meeting laid the groundwork for future regional exercise scenarios focusing on CBRN medical preparedness and response. Looking

ahead to 2024-2025, the STCU plans to organize four regional exercises addressing chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear scenarios for first-line responders and hospital emergency staff.

#### Looking Ahead to 2024

STCU is excited to continue the P088 project into 2024, with several key events planned to further strengthen CBRN medical preparedness and response capabilities across the SEEE region:

- Third Ukrainian National CBRN Emergency Medicine Training: Scheduled for May 2024 in Kyiv, Ukraine, this training will build on previous efforts to enhance the skills and knowledge of first responders and medical personnel.
- SEEE Regional Table-top Exercise (TTX) on Medical Management of CBRN Emergency: Set for June 2024 in Batumi, Georgia, this exercise will simulate CBRN emergency scenarios, allowing participants to practice and refine their response strategies.
- Training Workshop on Medical System Preparedness and Response to Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies: Scheduled for late June 2024 in Chisinau, Moldova, this workshop will focus on preparing medical systems to effectively handle radiological and nuclear emergencies.
- Field Exercise called RadEX: To be conducted in Moldova in late September 2024, RadEX will provide hands-on training and simulations to improve the practical response capabilities of emergency medical teams.

STCU remains committed to fostering regional cooperation, sharing expertise, and enhancing the skills of medical responders. These upcoming initiatives within the framework of the EU's CBRN CoE Project P88 will further strengthen the resilience and coordination of emergency medical systems, ensuring the safety and well-being of communities across the SEEE region.



Study visit to Oslo in December 2023

# Defending Facts: U.S. Funds Boost Ukraine's Battle Against Russian **Nuclear Disinformation**

The U.S. Department of State supported Ukrainian initiatives significant outreach efforts are made to educate the public to counter Russian disinformation. Initially, \$100,000 was provided for five projects, with two subsequent injections of fuel in Ukrainian VVER reactors. Recent accomplishments \$100,000 each, totaling \$300,000. These projects address the substantial increase in disinformation by the Russian Federation following its invasion of Ukraine on February 24,2022.

#### **Project Summaries**

**Project** 7106: Countering Nuclear Disinformation against Westinghouse Led by the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Science and Technology Establishment at the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology, this project aims to counteract disinformation against Westinghouse as a supplier of nuclear fuel for VVER-1000 reactors in Ukraine. Activities include monitoring global media, identifying disinformation threats, and presenting information through reports and conferences. Articles are published in scientific journals, and

and media about the safety and efficacy of Westinghouse include publishing articles on major news websites and presenting findings at international conferences.

Project 7107: Analysis of Russian Civil Nuclear Capabilities and Risks This project, managed by JSC «Kyiv Research and Design Institute «ENERGOPROJECT», focuses on analyzing Russia's civil nuclear capabilities under sanctions and the nuclear fuel cycle. Key activities include collecting and analyzing data from various sources, engaging with Eastern European experts, and identifying risks associated with Russian civil nuclear technology. The project aims to increase awareness of potential risks of doing business with sanctioned Russian entities. Recent efforts involve technical meetings and presentations on AI in the nuclear sector and fostering collaborations to counter nuclear energy disinformation.



### Що стоїть за російськими "ядерними фейками"?

CEPESA, 14 BEPECHE 2022, 09:00



Оприлюднений 6 вересня звіт про наслідки місії МАГАТЕ на окуповану ЗАЕС не задовольнив багатьох в Україні. В ньому не було заклику до виведення російських військ із території станції та не йшлося про відповідальність рф за її обстріли.

Проте мусимо тверезо визнати: сам мандат МАГАТЕ виключав будь-які політичні (а надто військові) оцінки.

Натомість у звіті було чітко зафіксовано присутність російських вояків та техніки поблизу реакторів та негативний влив "візитерів" із "Росатома" на роботу її персоналу.

**МАКСИМ СТРІХА** Що стоїть за російськими "ядерними фейками"? Ковід по-українськи: "позитивна статистика", або ласкаво просино до пекла Україна справає до найбільшої гуманітарної катастрофи доби

Project 7108 developed an article about Russian disinformation entitled, "What is behind the Russian "nuclear fakes""









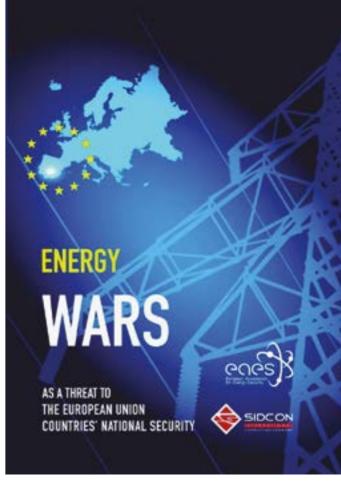




**Project 7108: Ukrainian Academic Response** to Nuclear Energy Disinformation The Higher School Academy of Sciences of Ukraine oversees this project, which documents and responds to Russian disinformation about Ukraine's civil nuclear energy program. The team monitors media, creates a comprehensive database of disinformation, and publishes counterarguments in major Ukrainian and international outlets. Notable efforts include press conferences, public lectures, and collaboration with the Center for Combating Disinformation under Ukraine's National Security Council. Recent articles have been published in high-profile outlets, addressing Russian nuclear threats and disinformation.

Project 7109: Public Communication on **Nuclear Safety** The Institute for Safety Problems of Nuclear Power Plants of NAS of Ukraine conducts numerous public engagements to address nuclear safety and counter Russian nuclear energy disinformation. The project includes interviews, podcasts, and public lectures. as well as participation in international conferences. These efforts aim to educate the public about radiation safety and debunk myths propagated by Russian media. Recent activities include public guizzes, career guidance programs, and round-table discussions with various stakeholders to combat disinformation.

**Project 7110: Evaluating Alternative Nuclear Technologies** Managed by SD Scientific and Technical Centre of the JSC NNEGC Energoatom, this project explores the diversification of civil nuclear reactor technologies in Ukraine. The team analyzes various reactor technologies, considering global trends and regulatory frameworks. They published two books on energy security, conduct comparative assessments of civil nuclear reactor technologies, and address Russian disinformation on Ukraine's nuclear energy policies. Recently, a new methodological approach for counteracting disinformation in the nuclear energy sector was developed and validated, ensuring a systematic response to disinformation.



Project 7110 developed the book entitled, "Energy Wars as a Threat to the EU Countries' National Security"

#### The Fight Against Russian Disinformation Continues in 2024 and Beyond...

Given the success and ongoing importance of these initiatives, the U.S. Department of State plans to allocate an additional \$300,000 in 2024 and beyond to continue these critical projects. This continued support will enhance efforts to counteract Russian nuclear energy disinformation and bolster nuclear security in Ukraine.



# From Tokyo to Krakow: STCU's Commitment to the GP and ISI

The Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP) was established in 2002 by the G7 to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Over the years, the GP has expanded to include 31 countries and international organizations, working collaboratively to enhance global security. In 2023, the STCU played a vital role in various GP activities, particularly in relation to Ukraine, which has faced significant challenges due to Russia's aggression.

#### Tokyo and Nagasaki: Japan Hosts Key GP **Meetings**



Participants of the GPWG meetings held in Tokyo in March '23

The first Global Partnership Working Group (GPWG) meeting of the year was held in Tokyo, Japan, on March 9-10, 2023, under the G7 Presidency of Japan. The meeting brought together approximately 140 participants from 24 Member States, the European Union, and international organizations, including the STCU. During the Nuclear and Radiological Security Working Group, STCU's Executive Director provided key updates on the security situation in

Ukraine, focusing on radiological and nuclear concerns, especially those near the Line of Contact. The discussions highlighted the urgent need for continued support to Ukraine in the face of ongoing threats, and the STCU's contributions were instrumental in shaping the dialogue on how to address these challenges effectively.

Later in the year, on November 9-10, 2023, the second GPWG meeting took place in Nagasaki, Japan. This meeting was significant not only for its discussions on CBRN security but also for its symbolic location in a city that has witnessed the devastating effects of nuclear weapons. The STCU Executive Director engaged with partners from various countries, discussing both ongoing and potential future projects. Participants also had the opportunity to visit the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, providing a poignant reminder of the importance of the work being done to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

#### Information Sharing Initiative (ISI): Enhancing **Nuclear Security in Ukraine**



Initiative

The ISI is an integral part of the Nuclear and Radiological Information Security Sub-Working Group of the Global Partnership. It focuses on coordinating the actions of international

donors and Ukrainian authorities to improve radiological and nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. The initiative was established to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices in nuclear and radiological security, ensuring that international efforts are aligned and effective.

The STCU participated in the first in-person ISI meeting in nearly two years, held in Oslo, Norway on April 19-20, 2023. Hosted by the Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority, the meeting brought together 80 participants, including representatives from the STCU, GP member countries, the Ukrainian government, the European Union, and other international organizations. During the meeting, STCU's Executive Director moderated a session that addressed the current needs and challenges faced by Ukrainian institutions in enhancing nuclear security. The discussions were crucial in coordinating ongoing projects and identifying potential future collaborations.













The STCU continued its involvement with the ISI by participating in a second meeting held in Krakow, Poland, from October 17-19, 2023. This meeting focused on enhancing nuclear and radiological security in Ukraine. with an emphasis on international cooperation in response to the ongoing conflict with Russia. The STCU contributed to discussions on the coordination of international donor efforts, ensuring that projects are compatible and effective. The collaborative efforts of organizations like STCU and international partners are essential in securing nuclear materials and strengthening Ukraine's nuclear safety framework.

#### Looking Ahead to 2024

The STCU looks forward to continuing its important work under the Italian Presidency of the Global Partnership in 2024. The year will kick off with key GPWG meetings in Rome in February 2024, followed by a scheduled ISI meeting in May 2024 in Prague. The STCU remains committed to fostering international cooperation and supporting initiatives that enhance global security, particularly in regions facing significant threats.



Participants of ISI meeting held in Krakow in Oct. '23

### **FINANCIAL ACTIVITY IN 2023**

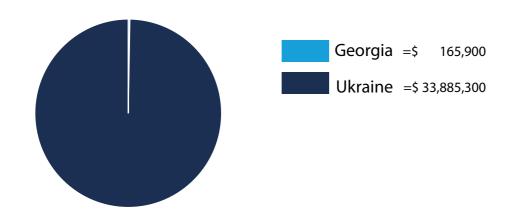
2023 saw STCU funding bounce back, and then some, from its down year of 2022 (not a surprise, given the start of Europe's largest land war since World War II), setting a record for the largest amount of funding in a year, beating the previous high by almost 40%. In 2023, the STCU Governing Board approved just over \$34.0M (previous record was 2021 = \$24.5M) in new projects, an increase of approximately \$26.0M in total new project funding compared with 2022 (\$8.1M). The United States and European Union, always strong supporters of both Ukraine and the STCU, significantly increased their support to both entities in reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. If the government of the Russian Federation hoped that Ukraine, and the STCU by extension, would be left on their own after the invasion, it was very much mistaken. The invasion galvanized the three STCU Parties (UA, EU, and US) as never before, with the funding results for 2023 as proof of their commitment to both Ukraine and the Center.

2023 funding was dominated (almost two-thirds) by three projects funded by the European Commission's DG-International Partnerships, formerly a part of DG-DEVCO, under their Instrument for International Nuclear Safety and Cooperation. The funds (~€20.4M, equal to ~\$22.1M) provided will help to remediate the disastrous effects of the almost six-week long occupation of the Chornobyl

Exclusion Zone (ChEZ) by Russian Federation troops, as well as enhance the safety of the ChEZ. With the European Commission taking the lead in the ChEZ, other international partners leveraged the EC's leadership and provided their own resources to contribute to the safety and security of the ChEZ. As a result, the leadership of Canada (\$3.2M), Norway (~\$2.7M), the United Kingdom (\$605K), and the United States (\$1.8M) all decided to join in this effort using the STCU as a multi-lateral mechanism, resulting in the largest multi-donor project funded (~\$30.4M) in STCU's history.

New partner project funding in 2023 (\$7.6M) increased compared to 2022 (\$4.0) but was lower than the very good year of 2021 (\$10.6) - for a very important reason. As mentioned in last year's annual report, there will be lasting effects on STCU funding because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Non-government funded projects at the STCU represented about 20%-30% of recent annual funding and totaled \$66.0M over the course of the Center's history (18% of historical funding received by the STCU) to the end of 2022. Partner funding provided a reliable source of non-donor funding for the Center over the years. Unfortunately, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it is apparent that given the heightened risks now associated with investing in Ukraine, this number will go down

### New Project Funding in 2023 by LOCATION OF RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION















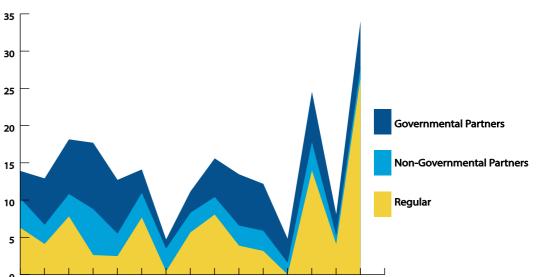
drastically and may approach zero for the foreseeable future. Fast forward to 2023 and non-government funding was only \$1.4M, the second lowest amount of such funding received (2022 was the low point) in the past fifteen years. Thus, the impact on this very important source of funding is real, and unfortunately, it will be long-lasting – at least until Ukraine's security situation is fortified.

Despite the ongoing war, funding in 2024 is expected to see another record year (~\$40.0M), as there will be several large procurement projects that the STCU is scheduled to implement to replace damaged or stolen CBRN equipment as result of the ongoing war in Ukraine. As of the writing of this report, the Spring 2024 STCU Governing Board looks

to have a funding sheet that will be just over \$32M in new project funding. That is for the first six months of 2024!

For the third time, external auditors from Crowe Erfolg Ukraine audited the financial management and accounting systems, as well as the system of internal controls for both the operations of the STCU administration and STCU-funded projects. The results of this audit can be found on the STCU's website at: www.stcu.int/documents/stcu\_inf/reports/audit/2023/. For the first time in STCU's history, the auditors did not deem it necessary to produce a management letter for the 2023 financial year.

# Regular/Partnership Funding, 2009-2023 (funding in millions USD/year)

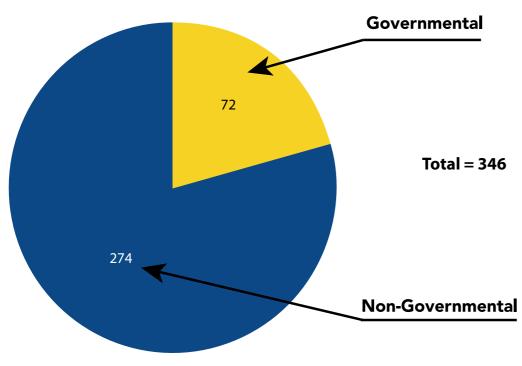


2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

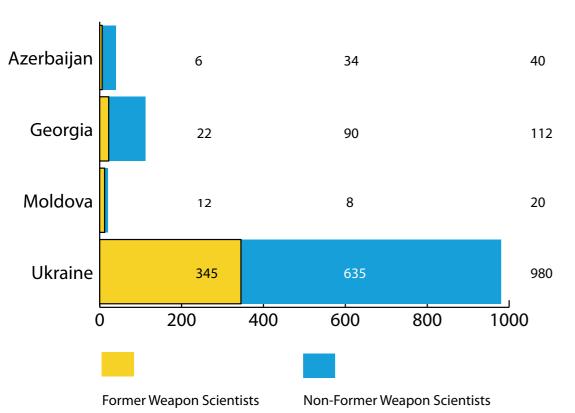
2023	\$26,46M		\$1,39M		\$6,23M		\$34M	
2022	\$4,08 M	æ	\$1,18M	S	\$2,84M	ရွ	\$ 8M	Total
2021	\$13,97M	Regular	\$3,83M	ž	\$6,74M	ver	\$25M	<u>ਡ</u>
2020	\$0.00M	≃	\$1,61M	Ŏ.	\$3,21M	Ħ	\$ 5M	
2019	\$3,17M		\$2,71M	m	\$6,30M	Governmental	\$12M	
2018	\$3,88M		\$2,70M	Non-Governmental	\$6,88M	_	\$13M	
2017	\$8,06M		\$2,35M	<u>a</u>	\$5,19M		\$16M	
2016	\$5,66M		\$2,64M		\$2,85M		\$11M	
2015	\$0,44M		\$3,04M		\$1,24M		\$ 5M	
2014	\$7,67M		\$3,31M		\$3,13M		\$14M	
2013	\$2,48M		\$3,02M		\$7,21M		\$13M	
2012	\$2,62M		\$6,17M		\$8,90M		\$18M	
2011	\$7,81M		\$3,01M		\$7,33M		\$18M	
2010	\$4,11M		\$2,58M		\$6,22M		\$13M	
2009	\$6,28M		\$3,95M		\$3,68M		\$14M	

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

# Total STCU Partners, Governmental/Non-Governmental



# Participants Redirected on STCU Projects During 2023 by LOCATION OF RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION







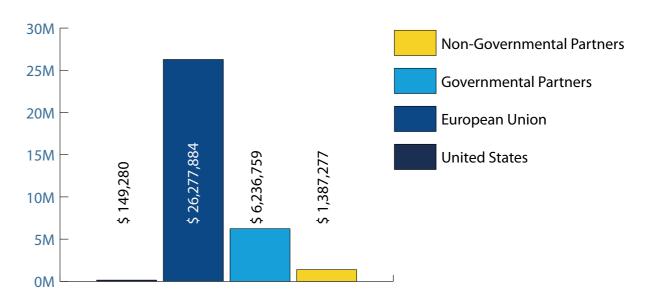




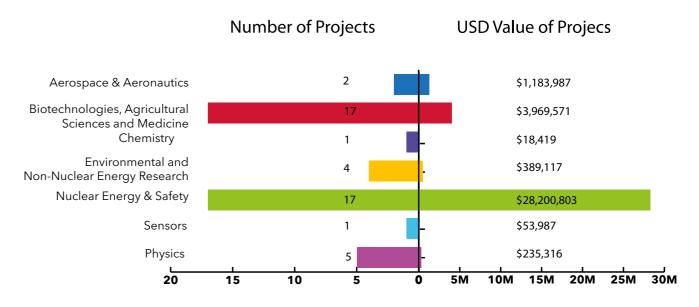




#### **New Project Funding in 2023 by SOURCE**



# New Project Funding in 2023 by PRIMARY TECHNICAL AREA



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