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CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

NATO Maven Smart System

IMPLEMENTED 2025–2026 · DEFENCE AND SECURITY · BELGIUM · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY

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NATO bought an AI-enabled data platform for its operational command in six months, and reports it reached full technical operational capability in June 2026.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI and automation used: AI-enabled data and command-support platform (Maven Smart System NATO) that connects command and control systems and supports several AI models.

Implemented: 2025–2026. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: NATO's agency reports Maven Smart System NATO reached full technical operational capability on 22 June 2026, with use by over 1,000 users across Allied Command Operations planned; no outcome measures published

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 4 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA). NATO's technology and cyber agency, which buys and runs communications and information systems for the Alliance; its 2025 annual report gives total revenue of about €1.26 billion for 2025. The system is used by Allied Command Operations, whose headquarters is SHAPE in Mons, Belgium. Canvas block: 6. Data and technology. Also 4. Operations and process, 8. Governance and risk.

Business challenge

The challenge. NATO says it wanted a common data-enabled capability across the Alliance, connecting command and control systems and using AI applications from large language models to machine learning (NATO release, via DefenseScoop). It also wanted to adopt emerging AI faster.

Who implemented it

Palantir (Software vendor): Supplier of Maven Smart System NATO..
In-house (In-house): Acquired, delivered and accredited the system for Allied Command Operations..
NATO's release says the system is separate from the US National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's Maven programme.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: not established; the sources do not say how the system works. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Palantir, Maven Smart System NATO.

Where it was built in: Connects command and control systems across the NATO enterprise and supports any AI model, such as France's Mistral AI and the U.S.'s Meta Platforms, per SHAPE; accredited for NATO's classified network.

What changed

Before: Not reported in detail; NATO described the contract as one of the most expeditious in its history, at six months from outlining the requirement to acquiring the system. After: the system passed user acceptance testing in July 2025, declared interim operational capability in December 2025 and, per SHAPE, reached full technical operational capability on 22 June 2026. Measured benefits to operations: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4]

What it cost

Not reported. Neither party commented on the terms of the deal, per DefenseScoop.

What it saved

Not reported. NCIA's annual report says the deployment strengthened decision advantage for NATO forces; no figures are given. [1] [2] [3] [4]

Governance and control

NCIA says it advanced compliance with NATO's Principles of Responsible Use of AI in 2025; the statement is agency-wide and does not refer to this system. The NATO Security Accreditation Board granted the system full security accreditation for NATO's classified network, per SHAPE's release. Human oversight arrangements and assurance results for AI outputs are not published in the sources reviewed.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
NCIA's acting chief operating officer informed SHAPE in a letter of 26 June 2026 that the system met full technical operational capability, per SHAPE; a US Army colonel is named as TF Maven director. [3]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
NCIA says it advanced compliance with NATO's Principles of Responsible Use of AI in 2025; the statement is

A2 · Human in the loop · Not reported
Not reported.

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Outside scrutiny (a regulator, court, auditor or similar body acted)
The NATO Security Accreditation Board granted full security accreditation for the system to operate on NATO's classified network, per SHAPE's release. This is security accreditation; assurance of AI outputs is not reported. [3]

A4 · Vendor AI · Claimed
Allies agreed a sole-source procurement of Palantir's software, per a SHAPE representative quoted by Janes; contract terms were not disclosed. [2] [4]

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
Not reported.

A6 · Standards and regulation · Claimed
NCIA reports agency-wide work to comply with NATO's Principles of Responsible Use of AI; no assessment specific to this system is reported. [1]

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Delivery pace: NCIA reports 18 months from funding approval to operational status, and integration into exercise Steadfast Deterrence 2025 within three weeks.

– Accreditation: the NATO Security Accreditation Board granted full accreditation for NATO's classified network, per SHAPE.

– The platform supports several AI models, with Mistral AI and Meta named and more planned, per SHAPE.

DID NOT

– Not reported.

UNPROVEN

– Whether the platform improves the quality or speed of operational decisions; no measures are published.

– Contract value and whole-life cost.

– How human oversight and assurance of AI outputs work in practice.

Timeline

Mar 2025 NCIA and Palantir finalise the contract for Maven Smart System NATO [2]

Apr 2025 NATO announces the award and says Allied Command Operations will begin using the system within 30 days [2]

Apr 2025 A SHAPE representative tells Janes that allies agreed a sole-source procurement [4]

Jul 2025 System passes user acceptance testing with SHAPE operators [1]

Dec 2025 Interim Operational Capability declared [1]

Jun 2026 NATO reports full technical operational capability on 22 June, with full security accreditation for NATO's classified network [3]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Process change.

Process change (Level 2, band C), by NATO's account. A shared AI-enabled platform connecting command and control systems was accepted against all of Allied Command Operations' requirements and accredited for NATO's classified network, with rollout to all subordinate headquarters planned. Use by over 1,000 users was planned; no outcome measures are published, so the change in how work is done is claimed only.

Graded C, marker Claimed only. By NATO's account, a shared AI-enabled platform that connects command and control systems was accepted against all of Allied Command Operations' requirements, accredited for NATO's classified network and is being extended to its subordinate headquarters. No measures of effect are published, and the AI's part cannot be separated from the data-integration work, so the change is the organisation's own account. The platform is partly AI: it integrates data and supports AI models.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The result in the sources is a fast, accredited procurement and rollout; whether AI itself changed outcomes cannot be separated from the data-integration and command-system work around it, and no results are published. Questions for a leadership team: how is AI output checked before it informs decisions, and what is the exit plan from a sole-source supplier?

1. Set accreditation and security approval as part of the delivery plan.
2. Keep the platform open to more than one AI model.
3. Publish outcome measures as well as delivery milestones.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Self-reported with trade-press relay: NATO and NCIA statements, NCIA's annual report, SHAPE's release as reproduced on GlobalSecurity.org, and Janes citing a SHAPE representative; no independent evaluation.

Evaluation method. Self-reported organisation figures: NATO and NCIA statements and an annual report; no independent evaluation of outcomes.

Sources disagree. The sources give two timelines: six months from outlining the requirement to acquiring the system (NATO, via DefenseScoop) and 18 months from funding approval to operational status (NCIA annual report). They measure different stages. The 2025 annual report expected full operational capability in May 2026; SHAPE reported full technical operational capability on 22 June 2026.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/nato-ncia-maven-smart-system

[1] NATO Communications and Information Agency: Annual Report 2025
https://www.ncia.nato.int/resources/site1/General/about_us/publications/NCIA_Annual_Report_2025_Digital.pdf

[2] DefenseScoop: NATO inks deal with Palantir for Maven AI system
https://defensescoop.com/2025/04/14/nato-palantir-maven-smart-system-contract/

[3] GlobalSecurity.org (reproduction of a SHAPE Public Affairs release, 30 June 2026): NATO Maven Smart System Achieves Full Technical Operational Capability
https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2026/06/mil-260630-nato-shape01.htm

[4] Janes: NATO agrees sole-source procurement of Palantir's Maven
https://www.janes.com/defence-intelligence-insights/defence-news/c4isr/nato-agrees-sole-source-procurement-of-palantirs-maven

NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA) website: https://www.ncia.nato.int

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