



SUSTAINABLE STANAG 6001 TESTING:

Language Centre during COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons Learned

BILC Annual Conference
May **XXth**, 2021



Presentation Outline

1. Introduction

2. Context of STANAG 6001 Testing in the Czech Military

3. First Wave Experience (spring 2020)

4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

5. Pros and Cons of the Introduced Approach

6. Conclusion



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1. Introduction

Aims of the presentation:

1) To introduce the approach implemented by the Language Centre (Czech University of Defence) to STANAG 6001 language testing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2) To evoke a discussion that would lead to the exchange of experience with regards to language testing under conditions of restricted interpersonal contacts.



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2. Context of STANAG 6001 Testing in the Czech Military

SLP required for nearly all positions within the Czech military/MoD.

SLP used as a prerequisite for career courses (mandatory for promotion).

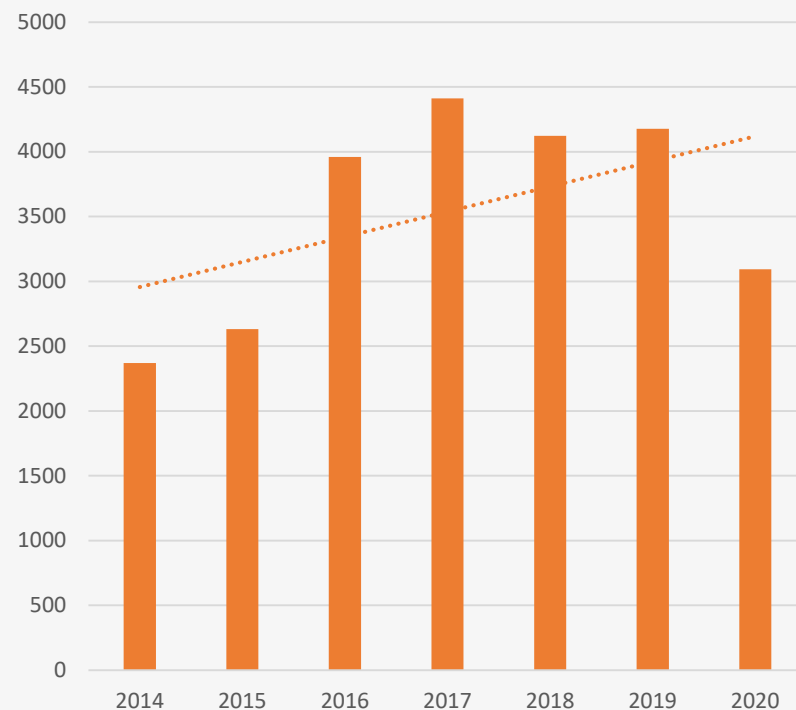
SLP representing a prerequisite for foreign deployments.

SLP belonging to promotion/selection criteria.

STANAG 6001 mandatory for all UoD cadets (English + 2nd foreign language).

STANAG 6001 testing compulsory for all recruits.

No. of Candidates Examined According to NATO STANAG 6001





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3. First Wave Experience (spring 2020)

Strict national shutdown

MoD restriction of travelling among garrisons

Suspension of full-time (residential) educational activities incl. testing

Interruption of STANAG 6001 testing between March 20th and May 13th.

Nearly two months of testing interruption generated a „testing deficit“ representing app. 20 % of annual testing performance (based on 3-years average figures, representing app. 800 candidates).

Efforts to subsequently “redeem this testing deficit“ mainly by:

- personal capacity of testers,
- hygienic measures (reduced no. of candidates),
- potential candidates availability.



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4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Second and subsequent waves – significantly worse impact of the pandemic of the Czech society;

Fall 2020 – national suspension of full-time (residential) educational activities, significant restrictions regarding testing.

MoD restrictions of travelling among garrisons.

Deployment of military personnel (support to police operations, COVID-19 tracing etc.).

Focus on preserving continuity of STANAG 6001 testing:

- search for sustainable approach to testing,
- balance between hygienic measures and the necessity to guarantee examination correctness (i.e. balance between reduced interpersonal contacts and monitoring of candidates during exams).



4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves



Distance Testing

- No epidemic risk
- No control of correctness (candidate identity, elimination of the use of different aids, tests recording/dissemination etc.
- INACCEPTABLE!



Traditional (Face-to-Face) Testing

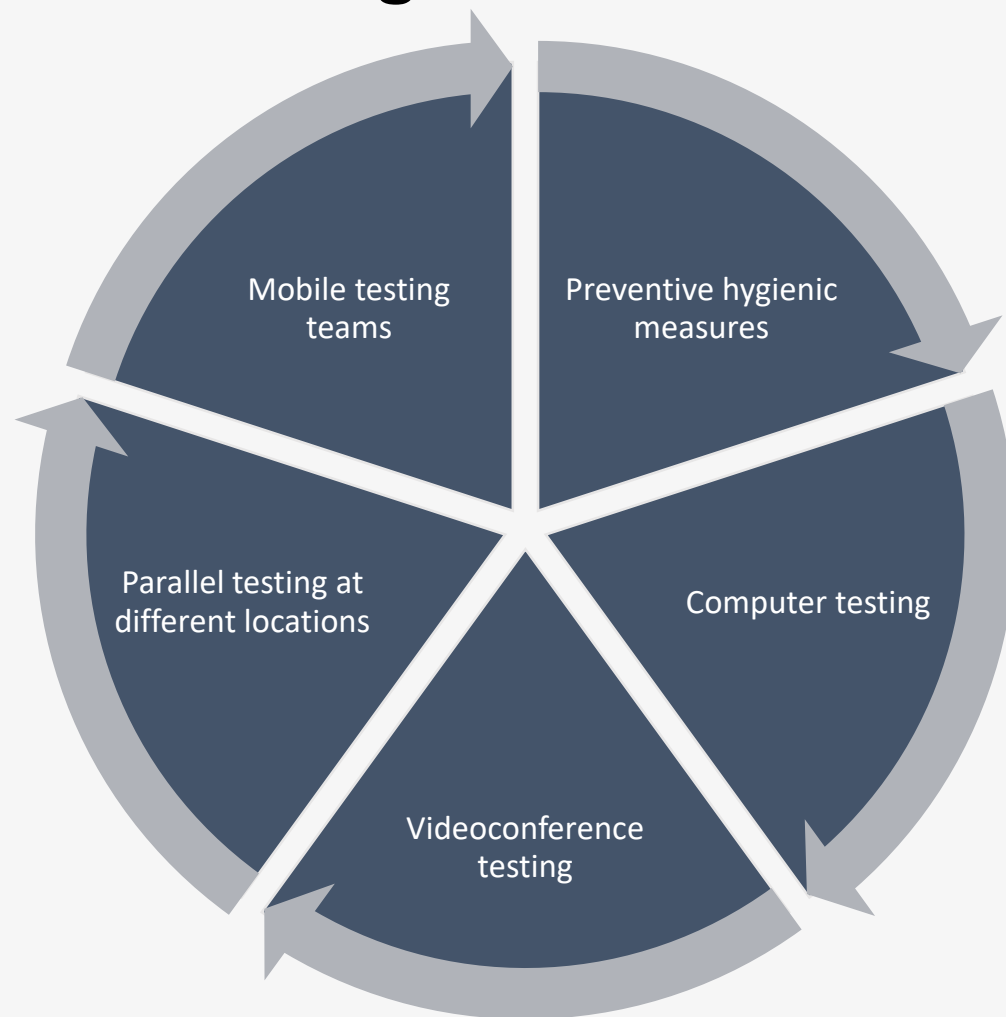
- High epidemic risk (travelling of candidates, personal contacts among candidates and testers)
- Traditional high control over testing correctness
- IMPOSSIBLE/PROHIBITED DURING PANDEMIC PEAKS

Compromise - Hybrid Approach



4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Hybrid
Testing
Model





4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Preventive hygienic measures

Limited numbers of candidates (10 persons per room)

Social distancing (min. 2m among persons)

Installation of mobile stalls/transparent panels relatively separating candidates

Compulsory use of masks/respirators

Hands disinfection

Two separate shifts of testers

Separation of testing premises/rooms (its intense cleaning/disinfection, incl. furniture, keyboards, headsets etc., regular airing during extended breaks)

Preventive questionnaire/declaration

Body temperature checks prior to testing

Prohibition of refreshments (snacks) in the testing premises

+ Antigen testing



4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Computer testing

- Electronic Testing Information System
- Introduced in 2020
- Tailor-made solution of the Language Centre (contractor)
- Able to run on any computer or smart mobile device, however the use limited to computers with installed NetSupport School application (elimination of potential abuse of PC/Internet functions)
- Introduced in detail during the BILC Professional Seminar in October 2020



4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Videoconference testing:

Speaking skill testing

One candidate alone in a testing room

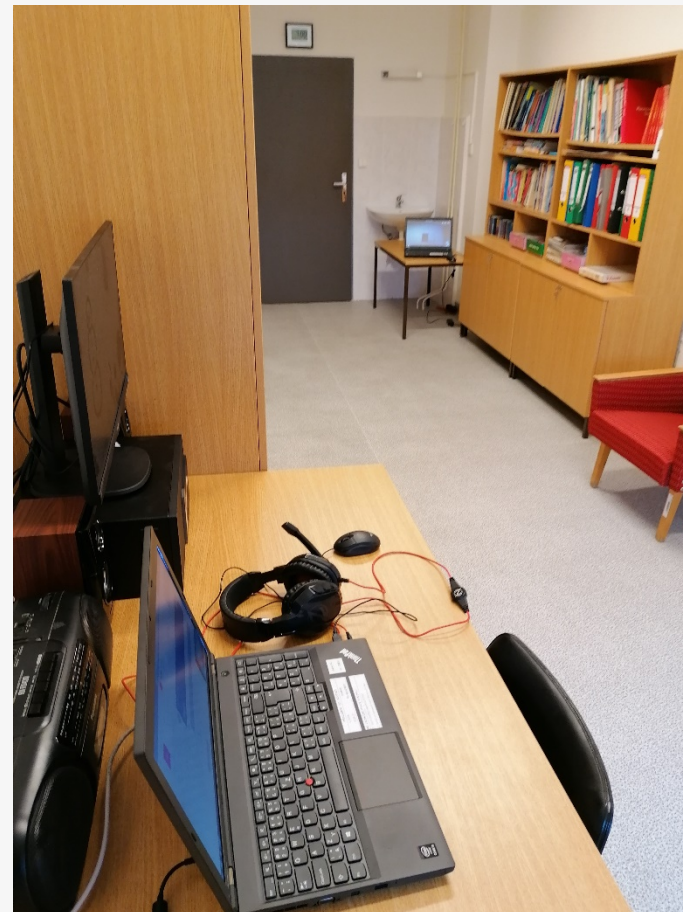
Testing rooms controlled premises (administrator checks candidate's identity, observes preventive measures etc.)

Videoconference based on MS Teams

Two parallel connections/PCs/web cameras per each candidate (1 for communication with testers, 1 for testing room observance)

Testers connected from any secured location

Recording of videoconference testing



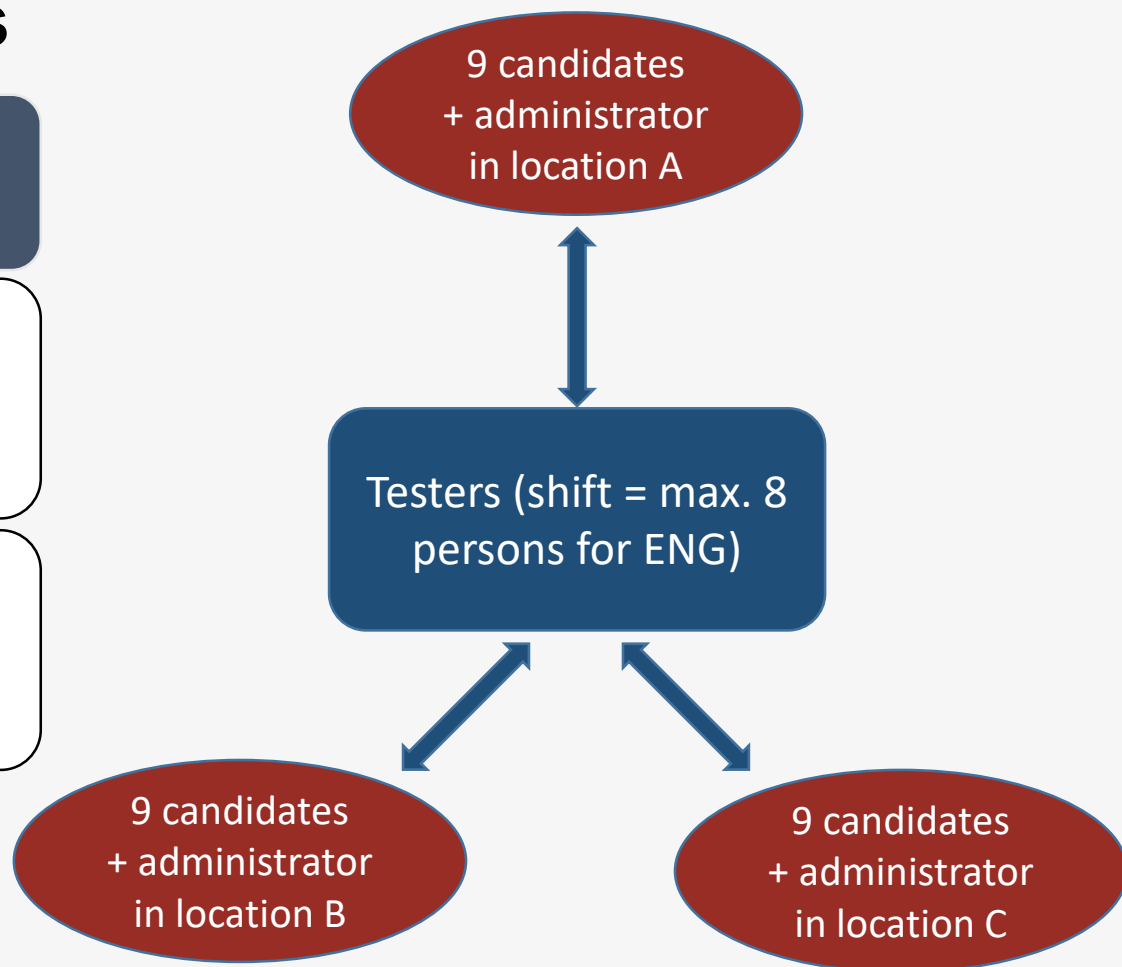


4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Parallel Testing at Different Locations

Exploitation of the maximum capacity of shifts of testers while reducing the concentration of several groups of candidates in one location (building)

Potential for reduced need of candidates travelling.





4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Mobile Testing Teams

Administrator (if not available in given location)

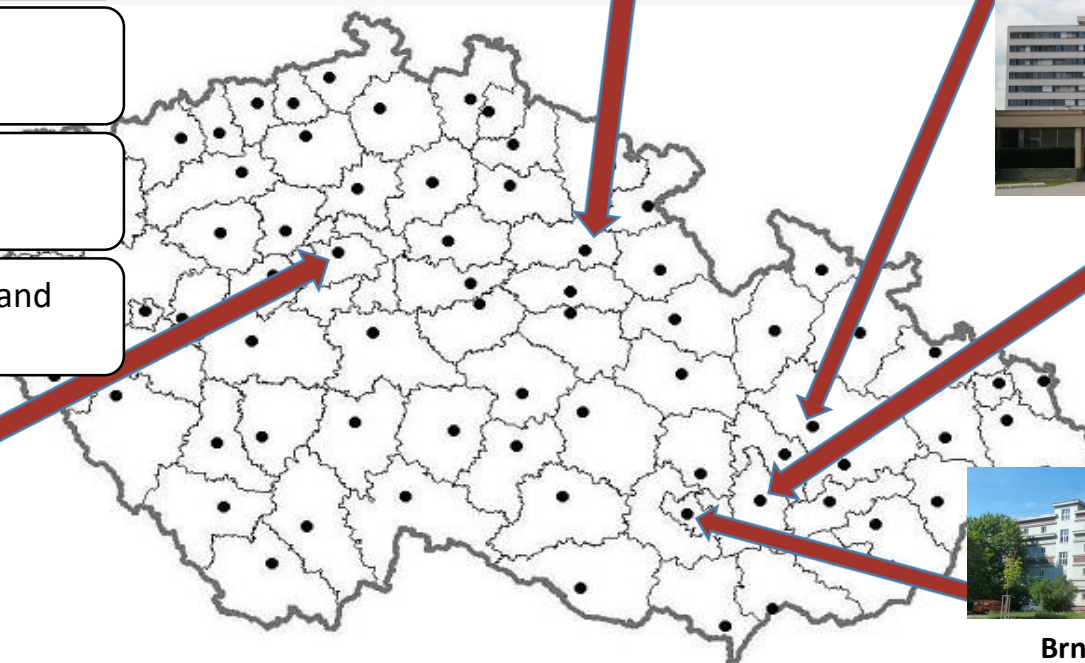
Set of notebooks (NetSupportSchool)

Secure Router

Need for reliable internet connection and adequate rooms



Prague



Hradec Králové



Olomouc



Vyškov



Brno (LC HQ)



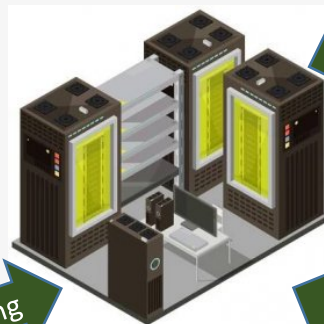


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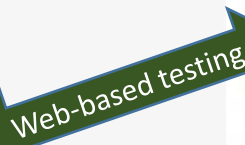
Hybrid Testing Model



Testing team: test management



UoD server room:
ETIS database



Testing location A



Admin.



Testing location B



Admin.



Testing location C



Admin.



4. Approach of the UoD LC during the Subsequent Waves

Hybrid Testing Model - Speaking



Videoconference
testing



Pair of testers

Testing room A



Videoconference
testing



Pair of testers

Testing room B



Videoconference
testing



Pair of testers

Testing room C



Admin.



Waiting room -
candidates



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5. Pros and Cons of the Introduced Approach

Pros:

- Possibility to sustain STANAG 6001 testing under unfavorable epidemic conditions
- Decreased travel costs/time of candidates
- Exam methodology unchanged, testing and basic format modified just by technology
- No negative impact of success rate detected
- Prevailing positive feedback from candidates

Cons:

- Does not fully eliminate epidemic risks related to testing
- Requires technology (HW, SW)
- Requires modified testers' training
- Higher demands of exam administration
- Higher demands of LC personnel travel (administrators, equipment)
- Need for reliable Internet connection (no independent/mobile connection available for LC yet)



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Thank you for your attention!



Questions?



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Colonel (GS) Assoc. Prof. Ing. Vladan Holcner, Ph.D.