

## **Re: Narrative Report**

My stay at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland was a highly enriching experience for me. The START Consortium is an inspiring research center specialized in many different areas of terrorism studies such as the countering of violent extremism, unconventional weapons and technologies, radicalization, etc. For me, as a geoinformation science student it was particularly interesting that they also have their own GIS department. This, at least in my perception, is something not so usual with research institutions or companies that are not primarily working in the GIS field.

START is a well-organized research center located just outside of Washington D.C. The University of Maryland offers a variety of services including the International Students and Scholars Service, which helps students/scholars from abroad with anything from visa problems to health insurance. The only thing I found particularly hard was to find affordable short-term accommodation in the town of College Park and the surrounding area.

Regarding my team and supervisor here, I have integrated well and have received a lot of help, from finding a place to stay near the University to programming issues while working on my project. There is a little room for improvement regarding the mentoring in terms of checking the progress of my project, which has not really happened on a regular basis. However, I always received help when I asked for it!

One particular positive thing about START are their enrichment sessions where researchers and practitioners from all over the world talk about their work, giving highly interesting insights. During my stay I have listened to talks about countering violent extremism in the Western Balkans, American Muslims, risk assessment and first response in crisis situations, all by experts of these fields. These sessions have been incredible inspiring experiences.

Overall I would highly recommend this host organization for future MP students who are interested in terrorism and security related topics.