

Delivering Future Advantage Through Testing and Evaluation

Webinar Clarifications

COMPETITION INFORMATION

- **Technology Readiness Levels**

- o **What is the expected TRL of any technological solutions involved?**

The proposed work should deliver at TRL 6 at the end of the contract, including any planned demonstrations in the proposal.

- o **The call references specific TRL targets. Should applicants build on accepted technologies as a baseline, or are totally novel solutions also considered?**

The proposals have to be new and novel. We are not looking for incremental improvements on current processes or capabilities, we are looking for things that are going to provide a significant enhancement to current capabilities and show a strong level of innovation and novelty around them. The target is TRL 6, so a fully functioning prototype in a representative environment.

- **Funding**

- o **How many projects do you expect to fund and what is the proposal limit?**

The total money available is £1,000,000, split across both challenges. A number of proposals may be funded, but we are expecting proposals to be in the region of £250,000 and so could fund about 4, but it may be more or fewer. It really depends on what comes through in terms of solutions. The £500,000 split is not written in stone, if we receive no proposals for the second challenge, but lots for challenge one then Challenge 1 will receive the funding. We will wait until we have reviewed all proposals before managing that split.

- **Supporting Activities**

- o **Are Outreach teams / other people in DASA able to put novice SMEs in touch with those who have been through the process before? Just for support and guidance**

There is a collaboration space linked in the competition document which you can use to identify potential partners. Your other options are to join other networking organisations such as the regional Defence and Security Clusters. They're normally regionally based, but they will accept members from outside their region so you can get involved and usually there are plenty of companies within those that will have worked with DASA before. You can also engage with the Battle Lab or have a chat with your local Innovation Partner and they will give you as much support as they can.



DASA PROCESS

- **Funding**

- o **If funding is allocated, are there any restrictions on how it can be spent? Must it be equipment only, or is consideration given to the wider Defence Lines of Development (DLODs)?**

Your proposal must include a project plan and associated costs with delivering that project. That is what we will contract to fund. Any legitimate costs related to the development of your technology and the delivery of demonstration should be included in your proposal. Capital items with a value over £10,000 and economic life greater than 12 months will be considered property of the MOD. Excluded items include items such as patent costs and attendance at conferences not directly related to delivery of the project.

- o **What guidance can you offer on building in profit to the project costs being submitted?**

You can include a profit in your proposal, there are no set rules, but one of the things that the assessors will be looking at is value for money.

- o **Would a time and materials basis be accepted? For Challenge 2, most costs would be assumed labour estimates.**

Legitimate project costs include labour, materials, facilities, purchase of equipment that might be necessary; any legitimate cost that is required to deliver the project. This is contract funded, it's not a grant, so as long as it's a legitimate cost for delivering the project, whether it's manpower or materials, that is acceptable.

- o **The DASA portal requires a Firm Price not Time and Materials. Can you clarify?**

It is a firm price that is required as part of your proposal. You will be contracted on the basis of your project plan and deliverables. Obviously not all projects go according to plan, but we will expect you to deliver a TRL 6 demonstration for the value of the contract that you've quoted for cost of in your proposal.

- **Submissions and further guidance**

- o **We have potential solutions covering both themes, a combined project would be more efficient - how should this be proposed/submitted?**

If you believe your proposal falls under both Challenge areas, please submit it to the challenge it aligns to most but also explain how it meets the requirements for the other challenge.



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o **What is the easiest way for us to get in touch with our local outreach team?**

Please visit [our website](#) and follow the page [Get in touch with DASA](#) where you can submit an inquiry form to your local innovation partner, they will be in touch with you within 10 working days.

• **Assessment and compliance**

o **How does DASA assess innovations that strengthen decision-quality and defensibility rather than purely technical capability?**

That will be down to the assessors on the day, it's going to come down to their decision, that will be done on an individual case by case basis against desirability, feasibility and viability.

o **How does DASA balance rapid innovation with doctrinal and legal-alignment requirements?**

Your proposal has to fit within UK law. If you're not quite sure whether your proposal is aligned with UK doctrine, submit an innovation outline to have a chat with your innovation partner so you can have a look at it in more detail.

• **Locations**

o **We are a startup from Switzerland. Is a legal entity required in the UK? Can an organisation based overseas (in Europe) put in a proposal for the themed competition?**

There's nothing in the Terms and Conditions to stop overseas companies bidding in.

o **Can the testing be performed outside of the UK - e.g. in remote parts of Africa, or in a conflict zone?**

We're looking for TRL 6, which is a demonstration in a representative environment, not necessarily TRL 7 which is an operational demonstration. You're asking for the competition team to fly out to a conflict zone to observe, I'm not sure whether that would necessarily be accepted.

o **For an SME based in Sunbury on Thames in Surrey is our initial point of contact South East, London or both?**

If it's inside the M25, it's London. If it's outside the M25, it's the southeast.



SCOPE

- **Integration and metrics**

- o **Does the MOD expect concepts in this competition to integrate with the digital T&E architecture under T&E 2030?**

Yes, where possible your solutions should be integrating or closely aligned to any digital T&E architectures.

- o **What sort of integration with other systems/standards are you looking for?**

There are several activities within the programme where we might want your solution to integrate with work we're already doing. If you can make something cross domain, that's an added bonus.

- o **Would assessors welcome system-level metrics like Mean Time Before Failure (MTBF) uplift, assurance cycle reduction, and operational availability gains?**

If you've got a new novel way of creating that data to help in the planning and understanding of maintenance schedules etc then that should be within scope of the competition.

- **Demonstration requirements**

- o **Would projects that can be piloted with non-MOD scenarios be preferred to requiring initial testing to be done with MOD resources?**

Previously we have accepted non-MOD scenarios if there are valid reasons as to why MOD scenarios can't be used. Although our preference would be to try and test with MOD Scenarios.

- o **Can you expand on what MOD considers a 'representative environment' for TRL 6 in this competition? thank you**

In the competition document there is a [link to the TRL levels](#). What we would consider representative environment very much depends on what it is that's being proposed. The feasibility section of your proposal details how you plan to develop your technology to TRL 6 and how you plan to demonstrate it. The terminology is very woolly because we have to cover so many different types of technologies and it's judged on a case by case basis.

- o **A project reaches TRL 6 using a representative non-MOD test rig, does that fully satisfy Phase 1 requirements, or is access to MOD-provided equipment preferred?**

It will satisfy Phase 1 requirements. Each proposal will be judged on its individual merits; you should describe how and where your plan to make your demonstration and that will be part of that assessment process.



- o **Conflict zone = Ukraine, where there is intense signal jamming, which is difficult and costly, to replicate in the UK**

We can't guarantee that we can arrange for the demonstration to take place in Ukraine, that is not our operational theatre. We suggest that you include a contingency or mitigation so that if demonstrating in Ukraine is not acceptable you have an alternative that is UK based as mitigation, it will be up to the assessors and then potentially the technical partner to advise on that.

- o **On mobile RF emissions, how can we bring testing capacity to the customer with OFCOM approval without us knowing where the customers are?**

Your demonstration needs to be in a representative environment. It is for you to articulate what you consider to be that representative environment as part of your demonstration. That doesn't mean that you will have to go to an MOD site necessarily. You just need to demonstrate your technology at TRL 6. There shouldn't be an issue in that respect because you should be able to work up from the beginning in your proposal how you plan to demonstrate this. You can request GFA in terms of facilities or equipment, but we can't guarantee that we can provide those and therefore in your proposal you must have mitigations or alternatives.

- o **If RF transmissions are in scope on a mobile basis - anywhere in the UK, how can the time consuming Ofcom application fit in an "at pace" aspiration?**

This is a very good question and we would be interested in any ways that allow faster OFCOM approval. For a particular demonstration of your proposal make sure you have factored in enough time at the start of the project. Make sure that you give yourself as much time to get those approvals in place.

- **Domains**

- o **For challenge one. Which domains are you interested in? Air, land. Surface and subsurface T&E.**

The reason why we have kept the competition document at a high level is that we're interested in all domains. If we do need to prioritise innovation ideas that are coming through for funding, we would look at those that have pan-domain utility. If your innovation or your idea has utility in several domains, that will be looked upon favourably.

- o **Where are the biggest assurance gaps observed across multi-domain operations: cyber, intel, logistics, command, or mission planning?**

This is why we put a call out with this level of detail behind it because we want you to come to us. We've given you the problem, we would like you to come up with the innovative solutions because that is where we see the cohort as really strong.



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- **Innovation and technologies**

- o **Challenge 1 states "solutions could allow real-time performance data collection". That is more through life support than T&E. Can you expand on what is in scope?**

The scope of the competition is on the competition document. Your proposal might be one that looks at collating real time performance data as part of your overall solution, so a system that could be used for in life monitoring is within scope.

What's not in scope is any innovation that looks at the collection of data or data management type technologies or innovations because it's more focused on the development of the deployable military capability as opposed to the data collection elements of it.

- o **How does Challenge2 interlace with initiatives to optimise/simplify Problem Statements/Requirement Sets? To prove 000's requirements is a significant time drain.**

We're trying to give a problem statement and therefore leave you who have the knowledge and expertise and the innovativeness to address it.

- o **Could you clarify what distinguishes an acceptable innovation from an existing commercial product for this competition, particularly for deployable NDT systems?**

If it's a commercial product, it's already above TRL 6 and therefore outside of the scope of this competition. It has to have a new and innovative element to it.

- o **Would innovation from methods/processes be considered? We work in the battery space and are development new methods for characterisation and cycling**

In the second challenge, that's specifically what we're after, we don't just want technological solutions. If there's methods or process changes that you are looking to bring in then please bring those forward because we want to see both technological as well as methodology.

- o **We develop bespoke Non Destructive Testing (NDT) systems for various applications. Would you accept a mature technology for novel MOD use?**

If there is an element of modification development required to develop it for MOD use, then that would take it below TRL 6 as a start point and therefore that would be acceptable. There has to be an element of development required and it has to demonstrate that it's novel.



GENERAL

- **End-user Engagement**

- o **How involved are the "end users" - e.g. Military Aviation Authority (MAA) - in this project, do they recognise and welcome innovation?**

From our point of view, the end users are most certainly involved, the programme works very closely with end users such as the MAA and I think this innovation is definitely welcome and they will form part of the assessment panels as well to help us prioritise which projects to take forward from that aspect.

- o **Will the T&E team help successful bidders connect with teams in MOD that could test / pilot / exploit outputs?**

Where possible we will definitely support that. We can exploit through the T&E transformation programme; we do have avenues available that we could exploit your innovations through.

If you do have dependencies on other teams within MOD to exploit that or test it and then make that dependency very clear.

- o **If the mobile testing system is built, will there be a real pull from MOD to use it?**

Absolutely. We would encourage you to look at the competition document again, because the examples that we've provided in the document are real examples of mobile testing systems that have been pulled through within MOD and are actively being used at the moment. There is a real desire to exploit across our stakeholder community, but as part of the programme as well.

- o **Will there be any restrictions on using the proposed system with other clients afterwards?**

The standard contract in terms of the conditions of DEFCON 705, you retain the IP, we do require user rights, but we're not going to be licencing it or competing with you. We want you to exploit it.

- o **What is the likelihood the MOD will actually procure the product once it has reached TLR 6?**

We can't guarantee that we will procure it, we've got several exploitation avenues and should it be of interest to our customers, then there will definitely be a push to procure those products.

- **General**



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o **A big blocker to innovation particularly autonomy is out of date regulations.**

Are these going to be addressed in parallel?

Our regulatory colleagues in the MAA are looking at this, this is something that runs along parallel to what we're doing, but we do work very closely with them.

o **In previous rounds, how common was it for bidders to be granted Government furnished assets (GFA)?**

It depends on what the GFA is. If there are projects that have dependencies on military capability, that's a lot harder to get, we don't necessarily have control over that and therefore that sort of GFA is unlikely to be granted. We encourage proposers, if they do have GFA requirements, to try and find mitigations to that just in case MOD cannot furnish them. Reports and similar items are something that we can definitely do if there's GFA specifically within from the transformation programme. If there is any particular GFA that you're concerned about, speak to us so that we can advise on whether that's something we will be able to provide or not.