

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Norfolk Virginia



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RELATING TO RFI-ACT-SACT-24-27

This document contains a Request for Information (RFI) Call to Industry, academia and nations for input to NATO's Innovation Continuum.

Industry, academia and nations wishing to respond to this RFI should read this document carefully and follow the guidance for responding.

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 HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
 RFI-ACT-SACT-24-27

HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation RFI 24-27 General Information	
Request For Information No.	24-27
Project Title	INNOVATION CONTINUUM 2024 Events
Due date for questions concerning related information	15 March 2024
Due date for submission of requested information	1 April 2024
Contracting Office Address	NATO, HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) Purchasing & Contracting Suite 100 7857 Blandy Rd, Norfolk, VA, 23511-2490
Contracting Points of Contact	1. Ms Tonya Bonilla e-mail : tonya.bonilla@act.nato.int Tel: +1-757-747-3575 2. Ms Catherine Giglio e-mail : catherine.giglio@act.nato.int Tel :+1 757-747 3856 3. Mr Robert McMaster e-mail : robert.mcmcaster@act.nato.int
Technical Points of Contact	CDR Stefano Aiello stefano.aiello@act.nato.int
References	
All request for clarifications, questions and responses to this RFI must be sent via email to all Points of Contact reported above. Individuals email will not be accepted and should not be sent. Contracting and Technical POCs must be included in any correspondence.	

1. INTRODUCTION

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) in order to engage with industry, academia and nations to understand state of the art capabilities that could have a positive impact on Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) and/or Digital Transformation (DT)

This Request for Information (RFI) does not constitute a commitment to issue a future request for proposal (RFP). The purpose of this request is to involve industry through collaboration, in an examination of future capabilities related to the implementation of MDO and DT

Further, respondents are advised that HQ SACT will not pay for any information or administrative costs

incurred in responding to this RFI. The costs for responding to this RFI shall be borne solely by the responding party. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any subsequent RFP if issued in the future. All information shared with ACT might be shared with contracted third parties in order to support the capability development process as needed. Provision of data, or lack of, will not prejudice any respondent in the event that there is a competitive bidding process later as part of NATO Common-Funded Capability Development.

2. BACKGROUND

The world is facing a complex and challenging security environment. Several factors are contributing to increased threats and tensions globally. At the same time, new Disruptive Technologies are rapidly emerging but their development and applications are not always transparent and at times do not take into account proper consideration of ethics.¹ NATO countries, who share values of freedom and democracy, are working closely together to deal with this changing security situation. Innovation in technology is crucial to maintain NATO's edge in protecting its members. However, the technological gap is narrowing as some countries are aggressively pursuing new technologies like AI, quantum computing and big data without adherence to basic rights and oversight. In this light, NATO is redoubling its efforts on technological innovation to ensure its continued ability to keep citizens safe effectively. The Alliance aims to accelerate research and integration of emerging technologies rapidly but in a responsible manner. The goal is to maintain NATO's capabilities to counter new threats while developing new tools in a way that respects principles of human rights and rule of law. Close cooperation among like-minded allies will be important to tackle both existing and future security challenges arising from geopolitical tensions and Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs).²

This is not a formal request for submissions as part of a procurement; but rather a general request intended to determine whether any possible solutions exist that should be included in one or many alternatives during the development.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1. Vision

Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is executing a comprehensive Innovation programme of work covering both traditional Science and Technology, and Open Innovation lines of effort. The number of projects in the programme is increasing over the past years and the delivery of valuable outcomes would not be possible without the active involvement of Academia and Industry from NATO nations.

In 2023, ACT increased the impact of their innovation portfolio by increasing the number of experimentation and demonstration events leveraging Emerging and Disruptive Technologies³ in support of NATO key initiatives such as Multi-Domain Operations⁴ and Digital Transformation^{5,6}. Those activities have been

¹ [NATO - Opinion: Joint statement by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the Prime Minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen, 29-Sep.-2023](#)

² [NATO - Topic: Emerging and disruptive technologies, 22 Jun. 2023](#)

³ Currently ACT's portfolio includes, but is not limited to, projects that address Artificial Intelligence, Autonomy, Quantum, Biotechnologies and Human Enhancement, Hypersonic, Space (technologies), Novel Materials and Manufacturing, Energy and Propulsion and Next-generation Communications Networks.

⁴ [Multi-Domain Operations in NATO - Explained - NATO's ACT](#)

⁵ [Empowering NATO's Multi-Domain Operations Through Digital Transformation - NATO's ACT](#)

⁶ [NATO Consultation, Command and Control Board \(C3B\) approves Digital Transformation Implementation Strategy](#)

proven to be very effective and the involvement of industry and academia in them was one of the key success factors.

Anticipating the further growth of innovation efforts at ACT, but also in the larger NATO bodies' family (e.g. DIANA, STO, etc...), ACT is introducing the **INNOVATION CONTINUUM**.

The vision is for ACT's INNOVATION CONTINUUM to provide a scalable framework to accelerate the provision of innovation solutions to the military community through experimentation and demonstration. ACT aims to enable effective collaboration on innovation projects across NATO and nations to inform warfare development. The framework also seeks to identify interoperability risks and opportunities, as well as orchestrate innovation initiatives across NATO and nations to increase synergies and knowledge sharing. The 2024 events under this framework focus on advancing Multi-Domain Operations and Digital Transformation through emerging technologies

3.2. Objectives

The **2024 INNOVATION CONTINUUM** will be organized around four sequenced phases (Figure 1) of scoping, scenario development, integration and demonstration/experimentation. Each of the phases will be conducted at the milestone events as follows:

- **SPARK Event** (scoping) - to be conducted in La Spezia, Italy 27th – 29th FEB;
- **IGNITE Event** (scenario development)- to be conducted in Pensacola, USA 13th – 17th MAY;
- **GLOW Event** (integration) - to be conducted in Q4/2024 – details will be announced by the end of Q1/2024
- **SHINE Event** (experimentation/demonstration) - to be conducted in Q4/2024 – details will be announced by the end of Q1/2024



Figure 1. INNOVATION CONTINUUM Events

The main theme of the 2024 CONTINUUM will be Multi-Domain Operation and Digital Transformation topics enabled by Emerging and Disruptive Technologies.

Industry and academia are invited to submit, for evaluation, their catalogues of the most promising research

and development efforts with potential for disruptive military applications related to Multi-Doman Operations and Digital Transformation. ACT will invite the selected responding organizations to participate in the 2024 INNOVATION CONTINUUM and may offer, for the most promising cases, deeper collaboration opportunities in the form of focused projects under the [Framework for Collaborative Interaction \(FFCI\)](#).

Active participation in the 2024 INNOVATION CONTINUUM will help all the stakeholders to better understand NATO's approach to Multi Domain Operation and Digital Transformation and will help to positively influence ongoing projects within ACT's portfolio of innovation projects.

3.3. Expected Benefits to Respondents

Active participation in the 2024 CONTINUUM will help all the stakeholders to better understand NATO's approach to Multi Domain Operations and Digital Transformation and will help to positively influence ongoing projects within ACT's portfolio of innovation projects. Further, their proposals may be selected for participation in events helping accelerate innovation for military communities. For promising proposals, deeper collaboration opportunities are possible through focused projects. Overall, involvement may lead to valuable collaboration and input on important defence innovation work.

3.4. Expected Benefits to NATO

The submitted proposals may produce solutions that accelerate innovation for NATO's military communities. Promising proposals could result in deeper collaboration through focused projects, helping NATO advance key areas like MDO and DT. The evaluation criteria also allow NATO to identify technologies and research that provide opportunities to enhance its capabilities. Overall, the RFI process may lead to valuable innovation and input to inform NATO's defence modernization efforts.

4. REQUESTED INFORMATION

4.1. The response(s) to this RFI shall be submitted by e-mail.

Submissions must include both the Contracting and Technical POCs listed on page 2. The responses shall not contain proprietary and/or classified information. HQ SACT reserves the right to seek clarification on submissions.

4.2. Eligibility to Respond:

Only NATO Nations, Industry and Academia that originate or are chartered/incorporated within NATO Nations are eligible to respond to this RFI.

4.3. Response Template...

4.3.1. Provide name, mailing address, overnight delivery address (if different from mailing address), designated point of contact (phone number, e-mail).

4.3.2. Respondents can collaborate with other providers, but all companies/organizations must be

clearly identified and their role/services clearly stated.

4.3.3. Response should include at a minimum a technical description and technical architecture diagram of the proposed implementation. Responses are not required to follow any format, but the following is proposed:

- a) Introduction
- b) Assumptions
- c) Technical / System Requirements
- d) Description of Network Implementation & Architecture Views
- e) Recommendations

4.3.4. Identify current services your company offers, which most closely match the capabilities, specified in this RFI (or portions of).

4.3.5. Available product brochures, specification sheets, photographs, illustration and technical descriptions that describe your company's current services are welcome. Companies are encouraged not to include marketing informational materials that do not relate to the services described in this RFI as it will be discarded; however, responses may include URL links to technical documentation materials (i.e., technical data sheets for products) are welcome.

4.3.6. Response limited to a single main document and enclosures for a total not-to-exceed ten (10) A4 / letter size pages (material provided as per paragraph above not included).

4.3.7. The document should be single-spaced, have one-inch margins, assume US letter-size (8 1/2 by 11 inches) page, use 12-point font, and be formatted for compatibility with Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat Reader (current versions).

4.3.8. Submissions should be named according to the following convention: <Respondent company name; maximum of 12 characters>_Innovation Continuum RFI_<date in YYYYMMDD format>.<filename extension of 3 or 4 characters>. Provide a list of your company's past and current customers to which you have provided or are providing similar services, including a customer/company name and point of contact, phone number, and address/e-mail where they can be contacted.

4.3.9. Responses shall not be classified above NATO UNCLASSIFIED.

4.3.10. The information may be considered in developing any future potential Statement of Work requirements. HQ SACT will consider selected information for developmental contracts and experimentation candidates.

4.4. Price Estimates

HQ SACT seeks non-binding Rough Order Magnitude (ROM) price estimates for the sole purpose of estimating programmatic costs and planning funding for future programme proposals/bids. Provision of data, or lack of, will not prejudice any respondent in the event that there is a competitive bidding process later as part of NATO Common Funded Capability Development.

4.5. Response Due Date

Responses to this RFI must be received by **0900 EST on 1 April 2024**.

5. CLARIFICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Inquiries of a technical nature about this RFI shall be submitted by e-mail solely to the aforementioned POCs by 5:00 pm EST **15 March 2024**. Accordingly, questions in an e-mail shall not contain proprietary and/or classified information. Answers will be posted as soon as possible on the HQ SACT P&C website at: <https://act.nato.int/contracting>.

All questions should be submitted by **15 March 2024** to allow for appropriate response time prior to the **1 April 2024** response due date.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1. Non-disclosure Principles and/or Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA) with Third Party Company.

6.1.1. Please be informed that HQ SACT may contract a company to conduct the Analysis of Alternatives investigation in support of this project. HQ SACT will follow nondisclosure principles and possibly conclude an NDA with that company to protect submitted information from further disclosure. As the third party beneficiary of this nondisclosure, this RFI serves to inform you how HQ SACT plans to proceed and HQ SACT's intent to protect information from unauthorized disclosure. This requires the third party company to protect the disclosed information using the highest degree of care that the company utilizes to protect its own Proprietary Information of a similar nature, and no less than reasonable care.

6.1.2. The third party company receiving the information shall not, without explicit, written consent of HQ SACT:

- a) Discuss, disclose, publish or disseminate any Proprietary Information received or accessed under nondisclosure principles and subject to an NDA, if an NDA is concluded;
- b) Use disclosed Proprietary Information in any way except for the purpose for which it was disclosed in furtherance of the goals of the instant project, collaboration, activity or contract;
or
- c) Mention the other Party or disclose the relationship including, without limitation, in

marketing materials, presentations, press releases or interview.

6.2. Organizational Conflicts of Interest.

As Procurement/Contracting involves the expenditure of funds allocated by the member nations, we must always strive to maintain trust in and preserve the integrity of the procurement procedures. It is essential that our procedures facilitate transparent and robust competition from industry.

Contractor and subcontractor personnel performing work under an HQ SACT contract may receive, have access to, or participate in the development of sensitive information relating to source selection methodology, cost or pricing information, budget information, and future specifications, requirements or Statements of Work or perform evaluation services that may create a current or subsequent Organizational Conflict of Interests (OCI). Similarly, companies responding to an HQ SACT RFI may create a subsequent OCI determination when pursuing future NATO contracts generated from that RFI.

Each individual contracting situation will of course be examined on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of any proposed contract. The exercise of common sense, good judgment, and sound discretion is required in both the decision on whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, the development of an appropriate means for resolving it.

In anticipation of a future OCI determination, any company either awarded an HQ SACT contract or responding to an HQ SACT RFI while also anticipating bidding on future NATO contracts relating to this work, should consider having a mitigation plan in place to address or mitigate any OCI concerns now or in the future.

6.3. Handling of Proprietary Information

Proprietary information, if any, should be minimized and clearly marked as such. HQ SACT will treat proprietary information with the same due care as the command treats its own proprietary information. HQ SACT will exercise due care to prevent its unauthorized disclosure. Please be advised that all submissions become HQ SACT property and will not be returned.

6.4. Exceptions to Obligations. The third party company receiving the information may disclose, publish, disseminate, and use Proprietary Information:

- a) To its employees, officers, directors, contractors, and affiliates of the recipient who have a need to know and who have an organizational code of conduct or written agreement with the recipient requiring them to treat the disclosed Proprietary Information in accordance with nondisclosure principles and the NDA (if executed);
- b) To the extent required by law; however, the company receiving the information will give HQ SACT prompt notice to allow HQ SACT a reasonable opportunity to obtain a protective order or otherwise protect the disclosed information through legal process that is:
 - demonstrated in written record to have been developed independently, or

- already in the possession of the company receiving the information without obligation of confidentiality, prior to the date of receipt from HQ SACT, or
- disclosed or used with prior written approval from HQ SACT, or
- obtained from a source other than HQ SACT without obligation of confidentiality; or publicly available when received.

6.5. Any response to this RFI is considered to establish consent to this process. A copy of the NDA, if or when concluded, can be provided on request.

7. QUALIFICATION PROCEDURE

Due to the expected high volume of applicants and the limited available time slots at the **2024 INNOVATION CONTINUUM events**, there is a qualification procedure to be followed for identification of the selected organizations. To ensure transparency and fairness for participating organizations, HQ SACT will use the following criteria when evaluating submissions:

- Does a proposed solution present an acceleration opportunity for MDO operationalization?
- Does a proposed solution present an acceleration opportunity for DT implementation?
- Did the institution in the past introduce any disruptive technologies to market?
- Did the institution introduce any disruptive ways of conducting a business to market?
- Does the institution present a finished and viable product/service for review and demonstration with significant military application?
- Is the list of proposals considered to be inventive, innovative, or disruptive?
- What is the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) level of products/services presented?
- Are there existing use cases that prove the worth of the products/services?
- Does the institution have the requisite facility security clearance, and do proffered industry participants have the requisite personal security clearance and access?
- Is the institution headquartered in a NATO Nation? If the answer is no, the company will be considered administratively non-compliant.
- Does the institution produce with success any technology/business predictions for the near/short term time horizons?

The answer to this RFI should be submitted by e-mail to the Points of Contact listed above.

8. SUMMARY

This is an RFI only. The purpose of this RFI is to involve industry/academia, through collaboration, in an examination of future capabilities related to the Innovation Continuum with a focus on technologies and commercial products. HQ SACT has not made a commitment to procure any of the items described herein, and release of this RFI shall not be construed as such a commitment, nor as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement will be required or sought. **It is emphasized that this is an RFI, and not an RFP of any kind.**

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