Request for Information 21-129

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
Norfolk Virginia

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RFI-ACT-SACT-21-129

This document contains a Request for Information (RFI) Call to Nations, Industry and Academia in support of NATO's Information Environment Assessment Capability (IEAC).

Nations and Suppliers wishing to respond to this RFI should read this document carefully and follow the guidance for responding.

This RFI is open to NATO Nations and industry or academia located in NATO Nations

General Information	
Request for Information No.	**21-129**
Project Title	Request for Nations, Industry, and Academia Inputs to the Future NATO Information Environment Assessment Capability (IEAC) (RFI includes Annex A: Excel File with Submission Questions provided as a guide)
Contracting Office Address	Purchasing & Contracting Section HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) 7857 Blandy Rd Suite 100 Norfolk, VA, USAF 23511-2490
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All request for clarifications and responses to this RFI have to be sent via email to all Points of Contact reported above	

1. **Description**

   1.1. HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI).

   1.2. This is a Request for Information (RFI) only. The scope of this RFI is to involve Nations, Industry, and Academia. The intention is to reach an improved ability to access and understand the information environment and to inform decision-making in a context of today's hyper-connected global society. NATO requires an Information Environment Assessment (IEA) Capability that combines analysts' experience with integrated data management, predictive analytics, visual representation, and a comprehensive understanding of the IE concerning own, earned, and hostile communications in one platform. The capability requires a blend of three elements: people, process, and tools – properly trained and organized analysts following defined processes in a coherent and informed manner, and using powerful and adaptive tools, including a common digital platform enabled by a range of data sources.

   1.3. This RFI DOES NOT constitute a current Request for Proposal (RFP) or a commitment to issue a future RFP. HQ SACT is not seeking proposals at this time. Therefore, HQ SACT will not accept unsolicited proposals in respect of this RFI. Responders note that HQ SACT will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in responding to this RFI. All costs for responding to this RFI shall be borne solely by the responding vendor. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP if issued. The purpose of this request is to involve Nations, Industry, and Academia through collaboration, in an examination of future capabilities related to the direction, collection, processing, dissemination, and integration of NATO IEA with a focus on the 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 authorisation to incur cost for which reimbursement will be required or sought. 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. **Program Vision and Desired Effects**

   2.1. Vision

   NATO's IEA capability is the "understand" function of Strategic Communications. It is a capability that synthesises open source, publicly available data from the Information Environment (IE), Target Audience Analysis (TAA), and the assessment of information effects in order to support NATO's senior leaders' and communicators' decision-making process and to improve NATO's communications planning and activities.

2.2. The Information Environment Assessment Program aims to

– Provide a codified approach to monitor, collect, process, and share data and information before it is assessed;
– Support NATO IEA analysts in assessing and visualising the data and information;
– Assist NATO IEA analysts to draw conclusions and recommendations to inform NATO senior leaders' and communicators' decision-making;
– Enable continuous analysis to enable better understanding of Own, Hostile, and Earned communications;
– Support NATO senior leaders' and communicators' decision-making;
– Improve assessment of Hostile communications;
– Enable in-depth tracking and analysis of specific topics in the IE for situational awareness and strategic anticipation;
– Identify social groups' dynamic behaviour on the IE;
– Monitor IE continuously at speed;
– Provide a deeper understanding of the IE;
– Provide an embedded, repeatable assessment methodology;
– Support leaders' situational awareness and strategic anticipation requirements;
– Provide faster, evidence-based decision-making from NATO senior leaders and communicators;
– Provide a deeper understanding of audiences leading to better objective setting;
– Enable accurate tracking and assessment of objectives and outcomes;
– Contribute to data-driven working culture throughout NATO;
– Allow continuous improvement of communications planning and tactics by embedding actionable insights.

3. Background

3.1. We are building a non-monolithic modular componentized solution (See Figure 1). The full scope of the capability involves Data to Decision; however, the scope of this RFI is limited from Data Sources, Data Management to Analysis (Figure 2). The APIs provide the method of integration between the components and between the elements that make up the components to support scalability and flexibility.
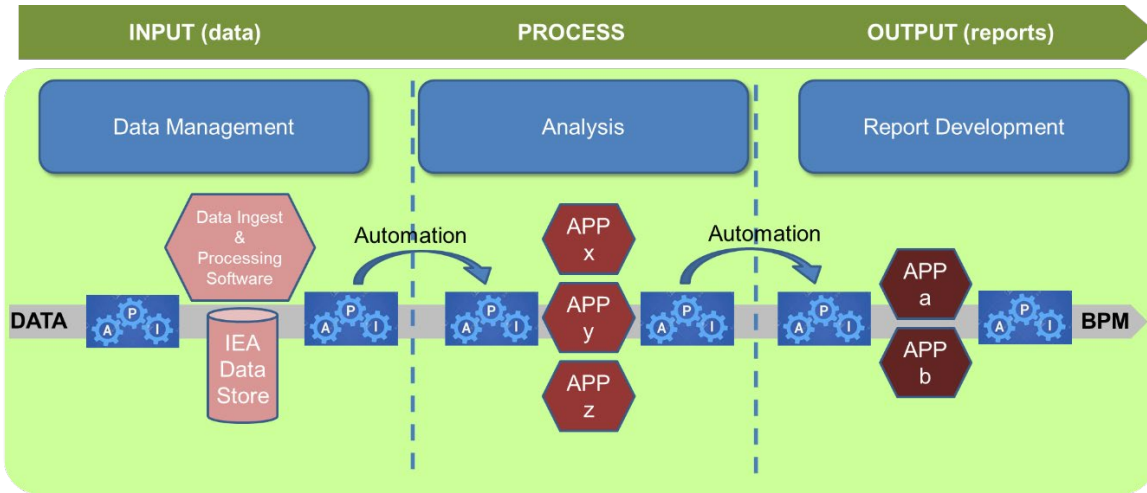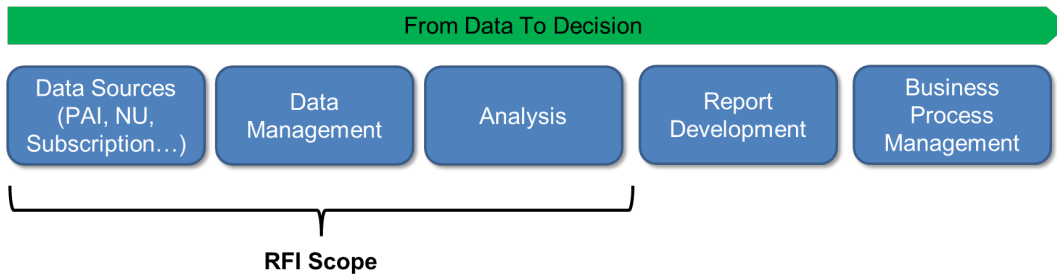
Figure 1. IEA Technical Architecture

Figure 2. RFI Scope

3.2. The IEA team is seeking information on any data management and data analysis tools that can support us in the goals of our non-monolithic modular componentized solution. The IEA team is also interested in the potential available data sources.

Note: The scope of Data Management includes search, collect, ingest, process, and store. The scope of Analysis includes analysis and visualization.

3.3. The NATO IEA programme is currently preparing a consolidated, comprehensive Capability Programme Plan (CPP) that will deliver a required capability which is detailed and expressed in the Capability Requirements Brief (CRB). This plan will direct the necessary actions across the NATO-recognised lines of development including Doctrine, Organisation, Training, Materiel (including software), Leadership, Personnel, Facilities and Interoperability (DOTMLPFI). This is NATO's capability programme planning stage within the NATO Common-Funded Capability Delivery Governance Model (CFCDGM).

3.4. Amongst other aims, the CPP will determine alternatives through an analytical comparison of the operational effectiveness and life cycle costs of different alternatives under consideration to satisfy the requirements. The Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) also

includes consideration of the different capability development strategies available to NATO which include "Adopt"-ing (an existing solution already in-service by Nations), "Buy"-ing (acquiring a solution from industry), or "Create"-ing (developing a solution exclusive to NATO needs), or a combination thereof.

3.5. To apply due diligence in discovering courses of action in support of the CPP, an RFI is necessary to 'test the market' and determine relevant technologies and products or services that may exist or could be created within Nations and the commercial market (as part of the consideration of "Adopt, Buy or Create"). This request intends to identify prospective (sub-) systems or products/services for which the team may need to conduct additional in-depth discussions. This is not a formal request for submissions as part of a procurement. It is intended to determine whether any possible systems or products exist, which should be identified during the development of the CPP.

3.6. **Intent/Objectives:** To support the transformational change of how NATO's StratCom community will be conducting IEA in the future, a CPP needs a robust AoA across the Adopt, Buy, Create, and Hybrid capability development options. This RFI is intended to give Nations, Industry, and Academia an opportunity to provide information that would allow NATO to determine potential benefits they might receive from a product or service, with a focus on available technologies.

3.7. **Expected benefits to respondents:** Nations, Industry, and Academia participants will have the chance to discuss and expose NATO IEA professionals to state of the art technologies and products.

3.8. **Expected Benefits to NATO:** Exposure to, and understanding of, state of the art technological and systemic drivers to conduct future Information Environment Assessment within NATO.

3.9. **Expected input from Nations/industry/academia:** Expected input to this RFI is Nations, Industry, and Academia perspective on relevant current and future technologies and products.

4. **Requested Information**

4.1. The enclosed Microsoft Excel spreadsheet is intended to collect information for this survey to be used in support of subsequent AoAs for NATO's IEA capability programme. This report and associated data will be used to assess and support a decision as to whether NATO should pursue an Adopt, Buy, Create, or Hybrid strategy towards its future IEA

capability. This AoA process may be conducted by HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation's AoA Branch or a third party contractor. ***Please see Section 7 for further information regarding third parties and non-disclosure.***

4.2. Any and all information provided as part of the submission in response to this RFI may be considered in developing any future HQ SACT requirements.

4.3. Any proprietary information is to be minimized and clearly marked.

4.4. All submissions become HQ SACT property and are not returnable.

4.5. The responses shall not contain classified information.

4.6. HQ SACT reserves the right to seek clarification on submissions.

5. Clarifications and Questions & Answers (Q&A) sessions

5.1 Request for clarifications and questions regarding this RFI shall be submitted via email to aforementioned POCs no later than **25 January, 2022**. Emailed questions shall NOT contain proprietary and/or classified information. HQ SACT, to ensure transparency, will publish, before the scheduled Q&A session, all responses on HQ SACT P&C website at: www.act.nato.int/contracting. HQ SACT will conduct two online collaborative question and answer (Q&A) sessions on **January 27th, 2022 and February 1st, 2022** (time frame: 0900-1100 EST | 1400-1600 GMT | 1500-1700 CET) to provide further clarification regarding responses published on HQ SACT P&C website (www.act.nato.int/contracting). The Q&A session will be also recorded and made available to all on HQ SACT P&C website.

6. Response Date

6.1 Responses are due no later than 11.00 am EST on **February 28th, 2022** to all aforementioned POCs. A format with questions is provided as a guide in Annex A.

7. Non-disclosure principles and/or nondisclosure agreement (NDA) with third party company

7.1 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 of how HQ SACT plans to proceed and of HQ SACT's intent to protect information from unauthorized disclosure, requiring 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. This includes the following responsibilities and obligations:

The third party company receiving the information shall not, without explicit, written

consent of HQ SACT:

- Discuss, disclose, publish or disseminate any Proprietary Information received or accessed under nondisclosure principles and subject to an NDA, if an NDA is concluded;
- 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
- Mention the other Party or disclose the relationship including, without limitation, in marketing materials, presentations, press releases or interviews.

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

- 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);
- 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; or
- 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; that is disclosed or used with prior written approval from HQ SACT; obtained from a source other than HQ SACT without obligation of confidentiality; or publicly available when received.

7.2 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.

8. **Organizational Conflicts of Interest**.

8.1 Companies responding to this RFI and companies conducting Analysis of Alternatives are hereby placed on notice responding to this RFI could conceivably create an organizational conflict of interest (OCI) on a future procurement, if a future procurement were to occur within the capability development process. Companies are cautioned to consider OCI when responding to this RFI, and to consider internal mitigation measures that would prevent OCI's from adversely affecting a company's future procurement prospects. OCI's can often be mitigated or prevented with simple, early acquisition analysis and planning and the use of barriers, teaming arrangements, internal corporate nondisclosure policies and firewalls, and similar prophylactic measures. HQ SACT is not in a position to advise responding companies on the existence of OCI or remedial measures, and encourages responding companies to consult internal or external procurement and legal consultants and in-house counsel.

9. **Summary**

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY with the purpose of involving Nations, Industry and Academia in the examination of available capabilities related to NATO IEAC with a focus on technologies, products, services and all functions that could enable the planning and delivery aspects of the capability life cycle. The information provided in this RFI is subject to change and is not binding on HQ SACT. 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. To reiterate, this is a RFI and not a RFP of any kind.