

**Headquarters Supreme Allied Command Transformation Norfolk,  
Virginia**



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**RFI-ACT-SACT-25-07**

This document contains a Request for Information (RFI) call to industry for their input to NATO's requirement for testing the implementation and performance of

**Maritime Autonomous Systems Capabilities**

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

| General Information  |  |
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| Request For Information No.  | 24-07  |
| Project Title  | <b>Maritime Autonomous Systems Capabilities</b>  |
| Due date for questions concerning related information  | <b>9:00 AM ET 06 January 2025</b>  |
| Due date for submission of requested information   | <b>9:00 AM ET 24 January 2025</b>  |
| Contracting Office Address   | NATO, HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)<br>Purchasing & Contracting Suite 100<br>7857 Blandy Rd, Norfolk, VA, 23511-2490   |
| Contracting Points of Contact  | <p>Robert Friend<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:Robert.friend@nato.int">Robert.friend@nato.int</a><br/>Tel: +1 757 747 4433</p> <p>Ms. Tonya Bonilla<br/>E-mail: <a href="mailto:tonya.bonilla@nato.int">tonya.bonilla@nato.int</a><br/>Tel: +1 757 747 3575</p> <p>Ms. Catherine Giglio<br/>E-mail: <a href="mailto:catherine.giglio@nato.int">catherine.giglio@nato.int</a><br/>Tel: +1 757 747 3856</p> |
| Technical Points of Contact  | <p>Name: Andrei Mititelu (Project Lead)<br/>E-mail: <a href="mailto:Andrei.mititelu@nato.int">Andrei.mititelu@nato.int</a></p> <p>Name: Jeroen Franssen (Project Lead)<br/>E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jeroen.franssen@nato.int">Jeroen.franssen@nato.int</a></p>  |
| <b>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.</b> |  |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Summary:** Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to engage with Industry on Maritime Autonomous Systems (MAS) capabilities. The intention is to evaluate what could be immediately available and what is state-of-the-art with respect to systems, products, services, technologies, and methodologies pertaining to Autonomous systems that can operate in the maritime domain. This includes surface, underwater and aerial systems. HQ SACT is interested in looking at the full spectrum of autonomy with this RFI, as well as systems with the potential to become autonomous can be included.
- 1.2.** This RFI involves Industry in an examination of Alliance-wide current capabilities related to MAS. HQ SACT has not made a commitment to procure any of the systems, products, services, or technology described herein, and the 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. 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 Request for Proposal (RFP), if issued in the future.
- 1.3.** This is an **RFI ONLY**. This RFI **DOES NOT** constitute a current RFP nor a commitment to issue a future RFP, nor does it constitute the commencement of any other type of procurement process for the Project. Therefore, those choosing to respond to this RFI **will not**, merely by virtue of submitting such a response, be deemed to be “bidders” on the Project in any sense, and **no** such respondent will have any preference, special designation, advantage or disadvantage whatsoever in any subsequent procurement process related to the Project. HQ SACT is not seeking proposals at this time; therefore, HQ SACT will not accept unsolicited proposals in respect to this RFI.

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 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

### 2.1 HQ SACT Framework for Collaborative Interaction (FFCI)

- 2.1.1.** HQ SACT has implemented a Framework of Collaborative Interaction (FFCI) to increase opportunities for Nations, Industry and Academia to contribute to HQ SACT's capability development efforts through collaborative work. Such collaboration enables HQ SACT, and NATO, to benefit from National, Industrial and Academic models, advice, capabilities and experience

in the course of this work. In addition to the benefits HQ SACT gains from such projects, this collaborative effort will provide Nations, Industry, and Academia with an improved understanding of NATO's Capability Requirements (CRs) and associated issues and development challenges that need to be addressed by HQ SACT. Potential collaborative projects are on specific topics that are of mutual interest to all parties but shall be restricted to collaborations in non-procurement areas. Several mechanisms have been developed to support the initiation of collaborative projects between Nations, Industry and Academia and HQ SACT ranging from informal information exchanges, workshops, studies or more extensive collaboration on research and experimentation.

**2.1.2.** Depending on the level and type of interaction needed for a collaborative project, a specific agreement may be required between parties. The FFCI agreement for any specific project, if required by either party for the project to proceed, will range from "Non-Disclosure Agreements" (NDA) for projects involving exchange of specific information to more extensive "Declaration of Mutual Collaboration" to address intellectual property and other issues.

**2.1.3.** More extensive information on the HQ SACT FFCI initiative can be found on the ACT website being developed to support FFCI projects at <http://www.act.nato.int/ffci>. Note that respondents of this RFI are not required to initiate an FFCI agreement to respond to this RFI.

## **2.2. The Common Funded Capability Delivery Governance Model (CFCDGM)**

**2.2.1.** The CFCDGM aims to accelerate the delivery of capabilities required by NATO commanders and the NATO Enterprise. It consists of six stages across the capability development life cycle, four NATO Governance level decision points, or Gates, and two optional decision Gates.

**2.2.2.** At the first decision Gate, the Military Committee (MC) approves the Operational Requirements (ORs) and determines if the submission of a Capability Requirements Brief (CRB) is required at the first optional decision Gate. Factors that may lead the MC to require governance approval of this product include anticipated capability type, the expected level of complexity and/or likely existence of more than one viable alternative for filling the ORs.

**2.2.3.** During stage 2 (Requirements Development), a CRB is developed to identify the specific CRs and potential courses of action, also to examine and confirm the courses of action that are best suited to deliver the capability within scope, cost and schedule.

**2.2.4.** During stage 3a (Capability Programme Planning), a Capability Programme Plan (CPP) is created, which includes details about the programme scope, schedule, risks and through-life costs. An Analysis Of Alternatives (AOA) occurs during this stage that involves an analytical comparison of the operational effectiveness, risk and lifecycle cost of alternatives that are under consideration to satisfy ORs as described in the Operational Requirement Statement and CRs articulated in the CRB. Alternatives identified can involve combinations of

materiel and non-materiel solutions from multiple Nations, Industry and/or Academic sources. **The intent of this RFI is to collect the information required to conduct these stage 3a activities and inform the development of the CPP.**

- 2.2.5.** This is not a formal request for proposal and it does not constitute the commencement of any other type of procurement process for the CPP; but rather a general request intended to determine **if any possible solutions exist that should be included in one or many alternatives** during the development of the CPP. Discussions related to the specific CPP requirements and related procurements should not occur during the RFI solicitation to avoid any conflict of interest or unfair competitive advantage.

### 3. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1. Vision

- 3.1.1.** The strategic significance of the sea to the Alliance cannot be overstated. It serves as a vital thoroughfare for trade, energy transportation, and communication, making it central to our prosperity and security. The maritime domain is undergoing an enormous change due to the new threats and opportunities that are being introduced by autonomous systems.
- 3.1.2.** Recent conflicts have demonstrated the significant impact MAS can have on conventional maritime forces. NATO needs to start developing concepts and techniques, tactics and procedures that can be used to mitigate these new threats in all domains.
- 3.1.3.** NATO should maintain and enhance its ability to operate effectively in the Maritime domain to prevent, detect, counter and respond to the full spectrum of threats using all available tools necessary. This will lead to the establishment of adequate training, operational advice and risk assessments pertaining to Autonomous systems.
- 3.1.4.** As a priority, NATO is seeking industry solutions that can be used to facilitate the training of NATO forces and the development of techniques, tactics and procedures to defend against MAS in all domains (surface, underwater and air).

#### 3.2. Objectives

- 3.2.1.** Allied Command Transformation is NATO's Strategic Warfare Development Command. Its mission is to contribute to preserving the peace, security and territorial integrity of Alliance member states by leading the strategic warfare development of military structures, forces, capabilities and doctrines.
- 3.2.2.** ACT aims to support the CD&E activities in the Maritime domain of NATO commands by leveraging on Capabilities, Assets and Resources coming from Industry.
- 3.2.3.** Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is surveying Industry to understand what solutions may be available and under which framework they might be

provided to the Commands that operate in the Maritime domain.

### **3.3. Capability Requirements**

**3.3.1.** The MAS Capabilities may deliver the following: new concepts and TTP's to deter and mitigate the use of MAS by opposing forces, a better awareness of strengths and weaknesses of these platforms, increased training capabilities for surface fleets and help inform the requirements process on the requirements for operating a fleet of MAS's.

## **4. REQUESTED INFORMATION**

**4.1.** This RFI is interested in information on industry capabilities to provide a full-service package of MAS (in all domains). These services include the leasing of systems, projecting them to the requested locations, operating and maintaining them and all other enabling activities that are required to provide a fleet of MAS.

**4.2.** This RFI includes all levels of autonomy and can also include remote controlled MAS.

**4.3.** HQ SACT is also interested in how Industry capabilities relate to the functional and non-functional CRs which are explained under Para 3.3 and rephrased as questions in Appendix 1.

**4.4.** Finally, this RFI is interested in information that informs capability programme planning. This includes the availability, readiness, and feasibility of Industrial capabilities.

**4.5. Eligibility to Respond.** Only Industry that originate or are chartered/incorporated within NATO Nations are eligible to respond to this RFI. Companies from Partner Nations who want to participate are recommended to partner with a primary company headquartered within a NATO Nation.

**4.6. Responses to the RFI.** The response(s) to this RFI may be submitted by email. **Submission is to include all of the Technical and Contracting Points of Contact listed above (page 2).**

**4.7. Response Date.** Responses to this RFI must be received by **9:00AM ET on 24 Jan 2025**

**4.8. Questions for Industry.** Please see Appendix 1 for questions and provide your answers on the spreadsheet.

## **NOTE TO RESPONDENTS**

In the interest of time and to maximize the number of responses to this RFI, the information provided should not be extremely complicated, overly detailed, or require significant effort to complete. Additionally, responses are not required if it is not applicable to your capabilities. A statement that the question is not applicable (NA) will be sufficient. Finally, in addition to your responses, we encourage you to include any existing materials you may have pertaining to your capabilities (e.g., marketing brochures, pamphlets, flyers, etc.).

#### 4.9. Clarifications and Questions

**4.9.1.** Inquiries of a technical nature about this RFI shall be submitted by e-mail to the aforementioned points of contacts **by 09:00 am EST on 06 Jan 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 Procurement and Contracting (P&C) website at: <https://act.nato.int/contracting>.

**4.9.2.** HQ SACT reserves the right to seek clarification on any submission.

**4.10. Intent/Objectives.** This RFI is intended to provide Industry an opportunity to provide data that would allow NATO to determine potential benefits they might receive from a capability.

**4.11. Expected Benefits to Respondents.** Industry participants will have the chance to reveal state-of-the-art systems, products, services and technology in the MAS Domain area of interest.

**4.12. Expected Benefits to NATO.** Exposure to, and understanding of, and use of current, emerging and future capabilities in the MAS area of interest and the services that industry can provide.

**4.13. Expected Input from Industry.** Expected input to this RFI is Industry providing services to support the future NATO capabilities in the MAS area of interest.

**4.14. Classified Information.** NATO information that is CLASSIFIED is not included herein but can be passed to authorized Industry and Academia recipients with appropriate clearances and control measures.

**4.15. 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 and will exercise due caution to prevent its unauthorized disclosure. Please be advised that all submissions become HQ SACT property and will not be returned.

**4.16. Non-disclosure Principles and/or NDA with Third Party Company.**

N/A

**4.17.** 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.

**4.18. Organizational Conflicts of Interest.**

**4.18.1.** Companies responding to this RFI and companies conducting Analysis of Alternatives are hereby placed on notice responding to this RFI could conceivably be a factor in the creation of an Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) on a future procurement, if a future procurement were to occur within the capability development process.

**4.18.2.** 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 preventative measures.

**4.18.3.** HQ SACT is not able 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.

**4.18.4.** OCI considerations should not be considered a barrier to responding, only a factor for long range business planning.

**4.19.** Follow-on:

**4.19.1.** 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.

**4.19.2.** The data collected in response to this RFI will be used to determine how Allied Command Transformation can support the concept development and experimentation efforts of the NATO commands in the Maritime domain.

**4.19.3.** In the event that there is a competitive bidding process later as part of NATO Common Funded Capability Development, the provision of data, or lack of, will not prejudice any respondent.

**4.20. Summary. This is an RFI only.** The purpose of this RFI is to involve Industry in an examination of Alliance-wide future capabilities related to MAS's with a focus on related systems, products, services, technology, methodologies, and engineering practices. HQ SACT has not made a commitment to procure any capabilities 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 emphasised that this is an RFI, and not an RFP of any kind.** Thank you in advance for your time and submission to this RFI.

Appendix:

1. Survey