

Subject:

IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 PART A – Q&A #3

Reference: Q&A PART #3

Date of Issue: 21 October 25

The following questions were raised with respect to subject **IFIB-ACT-SACT- 26-02 CDMS**. Responses are to provide clarification.

Questions	Responses
<p>1. LC16 - Could ACT please confirm whether a university degree is mandatory for the position, or if a specific number of years of relevant experience in a comparable role could be accepted as an equivalent qualification?</p>	<p>1. LC16 university degree criteria are to be considered non-disqualifying for a score of 0. It is yes or no criteria.</p>
<p>2. What penalties may be incurred for not meeting a resource over time?</p>	<p>2. The contract award is contingent upon the continued availability of the proposed candidate. Failure to provide the proposed candidate post award will result in HQ SACT rescinding the award.</p>
<p>3. Can we later bring outside people to replace resource churn?</p>	<p>3. HQ SACT expects that the company will provide the proposed candidate (see HQ SACT General Terms & Conditions at www.act.nato.int/contracting). Should a candidate resign unexpectedly, HQ SACT will request a replacement candidate. Bidders should not expect to be able to replace the candidate's post award outside of exceptional circumstances.</p>
<p>4. With reference to Bidding Instructions 4.e. / Clarification Answer 2; The bidder's national security regulations only award a FSC upon successful award of a contract which requires the management of classified information and is only applicable on a per project/contract basis, based on the purchaser's requirement to have an FSC at time of bid submission, this would unduly restrict competition based on our National Security Regulations Can the purchaser please clarify what security classification of materials must be managed at the bidder's premises in the following circumstances: During the bidding period and before the bid deadline During the project delivery and for the duration of the contract Can the purchaser please clarify which NATO directive specifically requires an FSC at the same security clearance classification when the bidder only delivers onsite personnel without any management of classified materials.</p>	<p>AC/35-D/2003-REV5 para 37-43 and ACT D 070-001 para 24.1-24.11 establish the FSC minimum requirements, and states that the responsibility/decision to grant one lies with the NSA/DSA</p> <p>If the bidder does not have an active FSC at the time of bidding and/or there is a national process that precludes issuing an FSC until award, the bidder may indicate this within the proposal in lieu of providing the FSC information.</p> <p>If the bidder is successful, however, any contract award shall be on a provisional basis and final award will not be approved until the NSA/DSA has provided an assurance that the bidder has been granted an FSC at the required level.</p> <p>The bidder is not expected to manage any materials at the facility during the bidding period or project delivery in this case.</p> <p>Bidders are requested to investigate national FSC procedures and advise the anticipated approval timeline within the proposal.</p> <p>AC/35-D/2003-REV5</p>

<p>5. LC 1, Item 1, Page 21 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Under the “Degree with relevant and demonstrable experience” category, could you please clarify what will be considered relevant and demonstrable experience?</p>	<p>Degrees in security studies, analysis, mathematics, and wargaming.</p> <p>Demonstrable experience includes delivering wargames in defense/security related environment.</p>
<p>6. LC 1, Item 2, Page 21 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Regarding the point values, could you please clarify how many points would be awarded for experience with 8–9 events? Would this fall under “Moderate experience (3–7 events): 4–10 points” or “Extensive experience (10+ events): 11–15 points”?</p>	<p>Moderate should read 3-10 events</p>
<p>7. LC 2, Item 1, Page 26 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Under the “Degree with relevant and demonstrable experience” category, could you please clarify what will be considered relevant and demonstrable experience?</p>	<p>Degrees in security studies, analysis, mathematics, wargaming.</p> <p>Demonstrable experience includes delivering wargames in defense/security related environment.</p>
<p>8. LC 2, Item 2, Page 26 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Regarding the point values, could you please clarify how many points would be awarded for experience with 8–9 events? Would this fall under “Moderate experience (3–7 events): 4–10 points” or “Extensive experience (10+ events): 11–15 points”?</p>	<p>Moderate should read 3-10 events</p>
<p>9. LC 3, Item 2, Page 31 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Regarding the point values, could you please clarify how many points would be awarded for experience with 8–9 events? Would this fall under “Moderate experience (3–7 events): 4–10 points” or “Extensive experience (10+ events): 11–15 points”?</p>	<p>Moderate should read 3-10 events</p>
<p>10. LC 4, Item 2, Page 36 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Regarding the point values, could you please clarify how many points would be awarded for experience with 8–9 events? Would this fall under “Moderate experience (3–7 events): 4–10 points” or “Extensive experience (10+ events): 11–15 points”?</p>	<p>Moderate should read 3-10 events</p>
<p>11. LC 4, Item 9, Page 37 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Regarding the point values for the “Yes” option, could you please clarify how points will be allocated</p>	<p>Based on years working in or with NATO entities, that would lead to understanding of NATO structures and the work environment.</p> <p>1-2 points for 1-2 years 3-4 points for 3-4 years 5 points for 5 years +</p>

<p>within the 1–5 range? The description does not specify the criteria used for assigning scores within this range.</p>	
<p>12. LC 5, Page 41-43 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The Best Value Criteria matrix totals 90 points, however the matrix states that 100 points are possible. Could you please clarify this discrepancy?</p>	<p>Grading is for 100 Points – see amendment #3</p>
<p>13. LC 5, Item 1, Page 42 / 39-40 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The Essential Qualifications section on pages 39–40 specifies “10+ years of progressive experience in data modeling, database administration, and BI development, including 2+ years in IBM-ELM and the IBM database environment (Db2).” However, the Requirements Matrix lists “Three years’ recent (i.e., in the last five years) experience in data modelling, database administration, and BI development in IBM-ELM and/or IBM-DOORS and the IBM database environment (Db2)” for the same criterion. Could you please clarify this discrepancy and confirm which level of experience (10+ years or 3 years recent) will be applied for compliance and scoring purposes?</p>	<p>See amendment #3</p>
<p>14. LC 6, Item 1, Page 47 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify what disciplines are considered relevant for the master's degree?</p>	<p>University degree in international relations, business administration, economics, public administration, operations research, political science, strategic studies or related discipline.</p>
<p>15. LC 6, Item 1, Page 47 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify what type of experience is considered when distinguishing between “master's degree without experience” and “master's degree with experience” for the scoring?</p>	<p>Policy/strategy analysis and the associated staff work. NATO / Non-NATO / government/international experience.</p>
<p>16. LC 6, Item 4, Page 47 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points are awarded within the “Russia only” and “China only” categories? The current description does not specify the criteria used to assign scores within the 1–15-point range.</p>	<p>The criteria to assign scores within the 1–15-point range will be based on the level of demonstrated experience and expertise on political, strategic, and operational levels. Bidders may assume a 1/3-1/3-1/3 split. Expertise and experience on Sino-Russia relationship as it pertains to the political, strategic, and operational levels is dependent on achieving scoring points based on experience/expertise on at least one of Russia/China.</p>
<p>17. LC 6, Item 5 and Item 6, Page 47-48 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points are awarded within the “Yes” category? The description does not specify what differentiates scores within the 2–10-point range.</p>	<p>Item 5: Evidence of external peer-reviewed publications or primary contribution to internal approved publications.</p> <p>Item 6: Evidence of practical experience or expertise in differentiating NATO HQ from SHAPE from NATO ACT and practical understanding of product tasking, development and approval processes.</p>

<p>18. LC 6, Item 8, Page 48 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points are determined within the “Military Strategic Headquarters” and “Military Strategic Headquarters supporting policy and strategy development” categories? The description does not specify the criteria used to differentiate or assign scores within the 1–10 and 11–20-point ranges.</p>	<p>Experience in a “Military Strategic Headquarters” entails a demonstrated understanding of the processes, policies, structures, relationships (internal/external).</p> <p>The additional “...supporting policy and strategy development” entails demonstrated understanding of developing policy and strategy within such a headquarters.</p>
<p>19. LC 7, Item 1, Page 51 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please clarify what constitutes a “relevant discipline” for the bachelor's degree requirement.</p>	<p>University degree in data science, artificial intelligence, computer science, statistics, mathematics, physics, pure sciences, engineering.</p>
<p>20. LC 7, Item 1, Page 51 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The scoring differentiates between “less than 2–5 years” and “5+ years.” Could you please confirm whether experience gained during postgraduate research or internships counts toward total years of experience?</p>	<p>Graduate-level research (MSc) does not count for experience. PhD-level or post-doctoral level research counts for experience. Cumulative months of internships outside academia count toward experience.</p>
<p>21. LC 7, Item 2, Page 51 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify what types of “strategic analyses” qualify for the 6–15-point range? Would analytical work for non-military policy institutes, academic projects, or think tanks be considered applicable?</p>	<p>Strategic analyses that connect national or Alliance political objectives with military strategy, examining how to use military power and other instruments of power to achieve policy goals. The analysis of internal and external factors, defining clear political and military objectives, evaluating resources and capabilities, and developing actionable strategies that account for risks and potential outcomes.</p>
<p>22. LC 7, Item 3, Page 51 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether practical experience with fine-tuning or prompt-engineering of Large Language Models (LLMs) is required, or if user-level analytical application suffices.</p>	<p>Practical experience with fine-tuning and prompt engineering of LLMs is required.</p>
<p>23. LC 7, Item 3, Page 51 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The requirement mentions “multiple LLMs (including from adversary/challenger nations).” Could you please specify which LLMs would qualify as “adversary/challenger nation” models?</p>	<p>Adversary/challenger nation LLMs refer to LLMs built or fine-tuned for the Russian/Chinese language, trained on Russian/Chinese sources. This includes proprietary or open-source models (e.g. GigaChat, YandexGPT, ruGPT, DeepSeek, WuDao, Doubao, etc.)</p>
<p>24. LC 7, Item 3, Page 51 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify what criteria will be used to differentiate scoring within the 6–20-point range for “Experience with multiple LLMs (including from adversary/challenger nations)?” The current description doesn’t specify what will determine the</p>	<p>Adversary/challenger nation LLMs refer to LLMs built or fine-tuned for the Russian/Chinese language, trained on Russian/Chinese sources. This includes proprietary or open-source models (e.g. GigaChat, YandexGPT, ruGPT, DeepSeek, WuDao, Doubao, etc.).</p> <p>Scoring will be determined by the level of demonstrated experience or expertise in these LLMs</p>

score within that range.	
25. LC 7, Item 5, Page 51 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Is there a specific framework or standard NATO expects to define “traceability”?	Not for the purpose of this evaluation.
26. LC 7, Item 7, Page 52 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 LC 7, Item 7: Please confirm what level of involvement is expected for “Broad experience/multiple applications”.	Demonstrated experience and expertise in the application of relevant advanced analytics tools, models, and methods in support of a broad set of problem sets.
27. LC 7, Item 8, Page 52 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 LC 7, Item 8: The scoring table lists “No (1 point)” and “Military Strategic Headquarters (2–10 points).” Could you please clarify what differentiates a 2-point versus 10-point candidate?	Experience in a “Military Strategic Headquarters” entails a demonstrated understanding of the processes, policies, structures, relationships (internal/external). The additional “...dealing with complex issues related to Russia or China” entails demonstrated understanding of workstrands specific to Russia or China within such a headquarters
28. LC 8, Item 1, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you clarify what constitutes a writing-intensive field?	A writing-intensive field of study emphasizes the importance of English writing skills in academic and professional contexts, as well as requires the analysis of written work and production of essays and/or research papers in English. Writing-intensive fields are found in the Humanities, Social Studies, Political/International Studies and Law. Applicants are encouraged to describe the English writing requirements of their degree(s).
29. LC 8, Item 1, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 The range for a master’s degree is 1–10 points, but no differentiation criteria are given. Could you please clarify what factors determine scoring within that range?	This range is determined by matching the graduate degree to the SOW. High points (range 9-10) will be awarded to those with a master’s degree in English, with additional graduate education in English earning a score of 10. Midrange points (4-8) will be awarded to those with a master’s degree in an English writing-intensive field of study. Low points (1-3) will be awarded to those with a master’s degree earned in a non-English environment and/or a non-writing-intensive field of study.
30. LC 8, Item 2, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you please clarify what is meant by “high-level documents”?	“High-level documents” are those written in English for leadership or for wide distribution within an organization, or those documents written on behalf of an organization for external readers. Such documents, which may include reports, papers, letters, articles, and briefs, assume a higher level of professionalism and writing effort than low-level documents (such as simple email messages and internal correspondence).
31. LC 8, Item 2, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Within the “3+ years: 1–20 points” range, could you	“Providing editing support” includes editing written work as an editor and/or editing student writing as part of being a writing instructor, coach or tutor. Points will be awarded

<p>please specify the basis for differentiation? What criteria would determine how many points are awarded?</p>	<p>according to these criteria:</p> <p>1) number of years providing editing support: 3 years = 1 point, 4 years = 2 points, 5 years = 3 points, 6 years = 4 points, 7 years = 5 points, 8 years = 6 points, 9 years = 7 points, 10+ years = 8 points.</p> <p>2) types of writing edited: A range of 1-7 points will be awarded for the variety of documents edited. Lower numbers will be awarded for fewer high-level documents, and higher numbers awarded for the variety of high-level documents edited.</p> <p>3) experience editing documents from non-native English speakers: 3-4 years = 1 point, 5-6 years = 2 points, 7-8 years = 3 points, 9-10 years = 4 points, 10+ years = 5 points.</p>
<p>32. LC 8, Item 3, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The scoring for compliant candidates is listed as “1–15 points”, could you clarify the factors that will be used to distinguish, for example, a 1-point versus a 15-point candidate?</p>	<p>The points awarded for “Experience in creating/writing/developing high-level documents and briefs” will be based on the breadth of experience of the candidate. Specifically, 1-5 points will be awarded for no or low experience (up to three years) of crafting high-level documents/briefs; 6-10 will be awarded for moderate experience (3-5 years) of crafting a variety of high-level documents; and 11-15 will be awarded for significant experience (over 5 years) of crafting a greater variety of documents. Applicants are encouraged to provide details about the types of documents they have crafted and the length of writing experience with each.</p>
<p>33. LC 8, Item 4, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify what differentiates scores within the 1–15 point range for compliant candidates?</p>	<p>For “Excellent skills in oral and written English (native speaker or equivalent level)”, the candidate should describe in great detail how his or her oral and written English skills are of an “excellent” level. A score of 1-5 will be awarded for answers that only discuss oral or written skills (but not both). A score of 6-10 will be awarded for answers that adequately describe both oral and written skills. A score of 11-15 will be awarded for answers that clearly demonstrate excellent in professional speaking and writing environments, with highest scores for those with extensive writing and public speaking experience.</p>
<p>34. LC 8, Item 5, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether teaching experience must have been conducted in a formal academic setting, or if corporate and military training experience will</p>	<p>Corporate and military training experience will be equally considered.</p>

<p>also be considered.</p>	
<p>35. LC 8, Item 7, Page 56 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>LC 8, Item 7: Could you clarify whether “course design” refers strictly to curriculum development for formal training courses, or if the creation of workshops, communication modules, or mentoring frameworks also qualifies?</p>	<p>“Course design” refers to the design of any group training, so the creation of workshops is applicable. Communication modules or mentoring frameworks, if they apply to only individual training or coaching, would be outside of the “course design” definition.</p>
<p>36. LC 9, Item 1, Page 59 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify what would qualify as “relevant experience” for this requirement?</p>	<p>10 years of relevant and demonstrable experience – NATO and/or military cross domain warfare / defense planning experience, capability development and programme support, Command and Control experience, project/programme management skills</p>
<p>37. LC 9, Item 1, Page 59 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether military staff college would be accepted as an equivalent to an academic Master’s Degree.</p>	<p>Depends on course of study related to military planning and /or command and control.</p>
<p>38. LC 10, Item 1, Page 64 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify what qualifies as “innovative digital products”?</p>	<p>Any kind of work that can be considered as an improvement of an existing digital product or the implementation of a novel digital product can be considered as an innovation.</p>
<p>39. LC 10, Item 1, Page 64 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether relevant experience in non-defence governmental or international organizations would be considered acceptable?</p>	<p>It is not acceptable for the criteria</p>
<p>40. LC 10, Item 7, Page 64 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether experience with other orchestration platforms (e.g., AWS ECS, Azure AKS) is considered equivalent?</p>	<p>We develop solutions that need to be deployable on vendor agnostic platforms as a standalone capability and that do not depend on managed services.</p>
<p>41. LC 10, Item 11, Page 65 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether experience in Scrum, Kanban, or similar agile frameworks all qualify equally?</p>	<p>We prefer scrum but consider other similar frameworks as equal.</p>
<p>42. LC 10, Item 12, Page 65 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you confirm what is meant by a “balanced team”?</p>	<p>Developers need to be able to work in a team where the different job profiles, backgrounds, and skills combine into a good working and balanced team.</p>
<p>43. LC 11, Item 1, Page 68 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p>	<p>Any kind of work that can be considered as an improvement of an existing digital product or the implementation of a novel digital product can be considered as an innovation.</p>

<p>Could you clarify what qualifies as “innovative digital products”?</p>	
<p>44. LC 11, Item 1, Page 68 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether relevant experience in non-defence governmental or international organizations would be considered acceptable?</p>	<p>It is not acceptable for the criteria</p>
<p>45. LC 11, Item 7, Page 68 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether experience with other orchestration platforms (e.g., AWS ECS, Azure AKS) is considered equivalent?</p>	<p>We develop solutions that need to be deployable on vendor agnostic platforms as a standalone capability and that do not depend on managed services.</p>
<p>46. LC 11, Item 11, Page 69 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether experience in Scrum, Kanban, or similar agile frameworks all qualify equally?</p>	<p>We prefer scrum but consider other similar frameworks as equal.</p>
<p>47. LC 11, Item 12, Page 69 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you confirm what is meant by a “balanced team”?</p>	<p>Developers need to be able to work in a team where the different job profiles, backgrounds, and skills combine into a good working and balanced team.</p>
<p>48. LC 12, Item 1, Page 73 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify what qualifies as “developing and adapting a DevSecOps platform”? Does integration or customization of existing platforms (e.g., GitLab, Jenkins) count, or is original platform design required?</p>	<p>Simple answer is yes, integration or customization of existing platforms (e.g., GitLab, Jenkins) counts</p>
<p>49. LC 12, Item 1, Page 73 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether equivalent experience in non-defence but security-critical environments (e.g., government or aerospace) would be considered comparable to NATO or national defence institutions.</p>	<p>We are looking for engineers who are used to operating in a security and governmental oriented environment and familiar with national defence or NATO best practices and policies.</p>
<p>50. LC 12, Item 3, Page 73 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm if CI/CD experience in non-production environments (e.g., R&D or testing pipelines) qualifies equally.</p>	<p>The development and use of our products require CI/CD experience that includes a production environment</p>
<p>51. LC 12, Item 12, Page 74-75 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether professional certifications (e.g., AWS Solutions Architect, Kubernetes Administrator, CompTIA Security+) could substitute</p>	<p>LC09-16 university degree criteria are to be considered non-disqualifying for a score of 0. It is a yes or no criteria</p>

for the degree to achieve partial points.	
52. LC 13, Item 1, Page 79 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you clarify what qualifies as “developing and adapting a DevSecOps platform”? Does integration or customization of existing platforms (e.g., GitLab, Jenkins) count, or is original platform design required?	Simple answer is yes, integration or customization of existing platforms (e.g., GitLab, Jenkins) counts
53. LC 13, Item 1, Page 79 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Please confirm whether equivalent experience in non-defence but security-critical environments (e.g., government or aerospace) would be considered comparable to NATO or national defence institutions.	We are looking for engineers who are used to operating in a security and governmental oriented environment and familiar with national defence or NATO best practices and policies.
54. LC 13, Item 3, Page 79 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Please confirm if CI/CD experience in non-production environments (e.g., R&D or testing pipelines) qualifies equally.	The development and use of our products require CI/CD experience that includes a production environment
55. LC 13, Item 12, Page 80-81 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Please confirm whether professional certifications (e.g., AWS Solutions Architect, Kubernetes Administrator, CompTIA Security+) could substitute for the degree to achieve partial points.	LC09-16 university degree criteria are to be considered non-disqualifying for a score of 0. It is a yes or no criteria
56. LC 14, Item 1, Page 85 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you clarify what constitutes “innovative digital products/systems”?	Any kind of work that can be considered as an improvement of an existing digital product/service or the implementation of a novel digital product/service can be considered as an innovation
57. LC 14, Item 1, Page 85 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Please confirm whether experience in innovation or digital-transformation projects within non-defence organizations could be considered equivalent.	We are looking for architects who are used to operating in a security and governmentally oriented environment and are familiar with NATO and government best practices and policies.
58. LC 14, Item 2, Page 85 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you clarify whether end-to-end delivery includes architecture oversight only, or requires hands-on design and coding across front-end, back-end, and integration layers?	This requires hands-on experience to deliver front-end, backend, and integration layers.
59. LC 14, Item 8, Page 86 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you clarify whether experience with equivalent tools (e.g., Sparx EA, Visual Paradigm, draw.io)	Draw.io is acceptable

qualifies if UML/ArchiMate models are produced?	
60. LC 15, Item 1, Page 90 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you please clarify what qualifies as “innovative digital products/systems”?	Any kind of work that can be considered as an improvement of an existing digital product/service or the implementation of a novel digital product/service can be considered as an innovation
61. LC 15, Item 1, Page 90 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Please confirm whether product development experience in non-defence environments would be considered acceptable.	We need experience operating in a security and governmentally oriented environment and familiarity with NATO and government best practices and policies.
62. LC 15, Item 11, Page 91 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you confirm whether non-Scrum but equivalent certifications (e.g., SAFe Product Owner/Product Manager, PMI-ACP, or Certified Product Manager) qualify?	We require Scrum for this role.
63. LC 15, Item 12, Page 91 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you specify which academic fields qualify as “related disciplines”?	Computer Science or equivalent
64. LC 16, Item 1, Page 95 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you clarify what qualifies as “innovative digital products/systems” in this context?	Any kind of work that can be considered as an improvement of an existing digital product/service or the implementation of a novel digital product/service can be considered as an innovation
65. LC 16, Item 1, Page 95 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Please confirm whether experience in civilian or commercial organization environments would be considered acceptable.	We need experience for operating in a security and governmentally oriented environment and familiarity with NATO and government best practices and policies.
66. LC 16, Item 2, Page 95 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you clarify what constitutes “complex” applications? Is complexity determined by user base size, feature set, or technical architecture?	Complexity is determined by the business rules and feature set.
67. LC 16, Item 9, Page 96 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1 Could you please clarify whether there is a requirement to provide a portfolio of work (flows, wireframes, visual designs, case studies)? If so, should it be included within the evaluation matrix or submitted as a separate supporting document?	A portfolio is required. It may be submitted separately (including a URL, as long as it can be attributed to the candidate) but at the same time as the submission
68. LC 16, Item 10, Page 96 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1	We accept any kind of certification that is related to the fields of UI Design, UX Analyst, Human-Centered Design, and

<p>Could you please clarify which UI/UX or related certifications will be accepted for evaluation, and whether certifications from specific providers or institutions are required or preferred?</p>	<p>others. We have no preference for providers or institutions</p>
<p>69. LC 16, Item 11, Page 96 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you specify which academic disciplines qualify as “related”?</p>	<p>Psychology, Information Science, Design</p>
<p>70. LC 17, Page 100-101 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please confirm whether item numbers will be added or provided for the SME Criteria Matrix? The requirements currently appear without item numbers, which makes referencing specific items for clarification or scoring validation difficult.</p>	<p>Numbering added – please see amendment #2</p>
<p>71. LC 17, Item 11, Page 101 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether a single security certification (e.g., CISSP, CISM, Security+, CEH) is sufficient to receive the full 8 points, or if multiple certifications are required to achieve the maximum score?</p>	<p>Full points will be awarded to candidates with any of the certifications</p>
<p>72. LC 17, Item 12, Page 101 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether significant professional experience (e.g., 10+ years) may be accepted as an alternative to a formal degree?</p>	<p>It is a yes or no question</p>
<p>73. LC 18, Item 1, Page 105 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify which academic fields qualify as “related disciplines”?</p>	<p>All academic fields that deal with physics, mechanics, electronics, engineering and equivalent</p>
<p>74. LC 18, Item 1, Page 105 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether equivalent technical qualifications (e.g., vocational diplomas or professional certifications with >10 years’ relevant experience) could be acceptable substitutes for the lack of formal degree?</p>	<p>These may be accepted, if the relevant experience includes design for tailored HW configurations</p>
<p>75. LC 18, Item 3, Page 105 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify what level of integration is expected? Is it firmware and protocol-level integration or higher-level software middleware?</p>	<p>Protocol level integration and higher-level middleware.</p>
<p>76. LC 19, Item 1, Page 110</p>	<p>These may be accepted, if the relevant experience includes</p>

<p>ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please confirm whether equivalent technical certifications or more than 10 years of relevant professional experience can substitute for a formal degree?</p>	<p>design for tailored HW configurations</p>
<p>77. LC 20, Item 2, Page 115 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether experience with all of the listed ticketing systems (Jira, GitLab, ServiceNow, Remedy) is expected, or if experience with one or more of these tools would be considered sufficient to meet the requirement?</p>	<p>Experience with one of the mentioned systems is sufficient but Jira is preferred</p>
<p>78. LC 20, Item 2, Page 115 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please confirm whether experience with equivalent helpdesk or ticketing systems (other than those listed) would be accepted?</p>	<p>Experience with one of the mentioned systems is sufficient but Jira is preferred</p>
<p>79. LC 20, Item 2, Page 115 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Please clarify whether candidates must demonstrate administration/configuration of ticketing tools, or if user-level experience (ticket handling) is sufficient.</p>	<p>User level experience and experience with management of tickets is required.</p>
<p>80. LC 20, Item 4, Page 115 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify whether documentation authored in other platforms (e.g., SharePoint, GitLab Wiki, Notion) qualifies equivalently to Confluence?</p>	<p>This can be accepted</p>
<p>81. LC 20, Item 6, Page 115 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether experience with all of the listed application monitoring and incident management tools (Nagios, Prometheus, Splunk, Grafana) is required, or if experience with one or more of these tools would be considered sufficient?</p>	<p>One or more is accepted</p>
<p>82. LC 20, Item 6, Page 115 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you confirm whether experience with other equivalent tools not listed would be accepted to meet this requirement?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>83. LC 20, Item 10, Page 116 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you clarify whether non-formal IT training (e.g., vendor certifications, bootcamps, or equivalent national-level qualifications) qualifies as vocational</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p>training?</p>	
<p>84. LC 21, Page 120-122 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please confirm whether item numbers will be added or provided for the SME Criteria matrix? The requirements currently appear without item numbers, which makes referencing specific items for clarification or scoring validation difficult.</p>	<p>See Amendment #2</p>
<p>85. LC 21, Item 1, Page 120 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The wording of this requirement appears ambiguous. It is unclear whether it refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bachelor’s (4-year) degree in a business-related field, or • A bachelor’s degree in an unrelated field combined with a DAWIA Level II certification in Contracting (or equivalent). <p>Could you please clarify whether a bachelor’s degree in a business-related field and a bachelor’s degree in an unrelated field combined with a DAWIA Level II certification are considered two different ways to meet the requirement, and how points will be allocated in each case?</p>	<p>Yes, these are the two different ways that a candidate can qualify. See Amendment 3 for clarification.</p> <p>Candidates with business related degree will receive 7 points (Bachelors) / 15 points (Masters) AND additional points for any DAWIA certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p> <p>Candidates with non-related degrees will receive 4 points (Bachelors) / 10 points (Masters) AND additional points for DAWIA level certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p>
<p>86. LC 21, Item 1, Page 120 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you confirm which non-US equivalents to DAWIA will be accepted as equivalent?</p>	<p>CIPS certification / NCMA certification will be accepted. Other national certifications presented as equivalent will be investigated upon receipt.</p>
<p>87. LC 22, Item 1, Page 126 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The Subject Matter Expert Criteria matrix totals 88 points. Could you please confirm whether 88 points is the correct full-score total for this position?</p>	<p>See Amendment #2</p>
<p>88. LC 22, Item 10, Page 126 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points will be assigned within the 1–7-point range for candidates holding either a university degree (24 hrs. business/management) or a DAWIA certification? What factors determine the specific point value within that range?</p>	<p>Yes, these are the two different ways that a candidate can qualify. See Amendment 3 for clarification.</p> <p>Candidates with business related degree will receive 7 points (Bachelors) / 15 points (Masters) AND additional points for any DAWIA certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p> <p>Candidates with non-related degrees will receive 4 points (Bachelors) / 10 points (Masters) AND additional points for DAWIA level certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p>
<p>89. LC 22, Item 10, Page 126 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p>	<p>Yes, these are the two different ways that a candidate can qualify. See Amendment 3 for clarification.</p>

<p>Could you confirm whether the degree and DAWIA certification are considered equivalent regarding the scoring or if one carries more weight than the other?</p>	<p>Candidates with business related degree will receive 7 points (Bachelors) / 15 points (Masters) AND additional points for any DAWIA certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p> <p>Candidates with non-related degrees will receive 4 points (Bachelors) / 10 points (Masters) AND additional points for DAWIA level certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p>
<p>90. LC 22, Item 10, Page 126 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points will be assigned within the 8-14 point range for candidates holding both qualifications? What factors will determine the specific point value within that range?</p>	<p>Yes, these are the two different ways that a candidate can qualify. See Amendment 3 for clarification.</p> <p>Candidates with business related degree will receive 7 points (Bachelors) / 15 points (Masters) AND additional points for any DAWIA certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p> <p>Candidates with non-related degrees will receive 4 points (Bachelors) / 10 points (Masters) AND additional points for DAWIA level certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p>
<p>91. LC 23, Item 1, Page 130 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify what qualifies as “equivalent professional experience” for candidates without a degree, including whether a specific duration or level of experience is required to receive up to 9 points?</p>	<p>“Equivalent professional experience” refers to substantial, directly relevant work that demonstrates knowledge, analytical ability, and conceptual understanding comparable to that obtained through formal academic study in International Relations, Defence or Strategic Studies, Political Science, Emergency Management, or a related field. This includes providing an opportunity for candidates who may not hold a formal academic qualification but have developed comparable expertise through significant, progressively responsible professional experience to demonstrate their suitability for the role. Assessment will consider the relevance, complexity, and level of responsibility demonstrated, as well as the overall duration and progression of experience. While no specific minimum duration is prescribed, candidates with extensive, directly relevant, and progressively responsible experience will be viewed more favourably in alignment with the intent of this criterion.</p>
<p>92. LC 24, Item 2, Page 135 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether the “Certified for less than 2 years” and “Certified for at least 2 years” scoring criteria refer to certification in ArchiMate, or to certification in an Enterprise Architecture framework such as TOGAF, DoDAF, or Zachman? There is some ambiguity because the scoring range mentions only ArchiMate, while the Item 2 requirement lists TOGAF, Zachman, DoDAF and UAF certifications.</p>	<p>See amendment 3</p>
<p>93. LC 25, Page 136-138</p>	<p>See amendment 2</p>

<p>ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please confirm whether the first compliance table (containing the minimum of number of required points in the Subject Matter Expert Criteria, FSC, nationality, language, and clearance requirements) applies to LC 25 – Strategic Thinker 1, as it does for other labor categories, since it is not included in the provided matrix?</p>	
<p>94. LC 25, Page 136-138 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please confirm what is the minimum passing point threshold in the Subject Matter Expert Criteria for LC 25?</p>	<p>Minimum of 70 Points in the Subject Matter Expert Criteria – see amendment 2</p>
<p>95. LC 26, Page 143-144 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The Subject Matter Expert Criteria matrix totals 110 points, however the matrix states that only 100 points are possible. Could you please clarify this discrepancy?</p>	<p>LC26 has 100 possible points and totals 100 points. LC 27 has 110 points possible and totals 110 points. See Amendment 3</p>
<p>96. LC 27, Item 9, Page 150 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether a portfolio should be provided as part of the submission? If so, what is the preferred method for providing it (e.g., via GitLab link, shared repository, or attached documentation)?</p>	<p>A portfolio should be provided as part of the submission, since it directly supports scoring this criterion. The preferred method is to include a link to a GitLab, GitHub, or equivalent online repository showing demonstrable work. Attaching code samples or documentation is acceptable only if no online repository is available.</p>
<p>97. LC 30, Item 4, Page 167 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please define what constitutes “limited,” “moderate,” and “extensive” experience with AI/ML frameworks?</p>	<p>Limited experience means basic familiarity, such as following tutorials or making minor modifications to existing models without end-to-end ownership. Moderate experience means applying TensorFlow or PyTorch in several projects, including building, training, and deploying models with a solid understanding of data pipelines and evaluation. Extensive experience means a proven record of leading or architecting complex AI/ML solutions using these frameworks, including model optimization, distributed training, and production integration.</p>
<p>98. LC 30, Item 4, Page 167 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Based on what criteria would points be assigned within the 2–5 (moderate) and 6–8 (extensive) ranges?</p>	<p>As often in experience-based assessments, points within each range are assigned based on the depth, scope, and independence of the experience of the candidate. Within the “moderate” range, higher scores mean, for example, a greater diversity of projects, stronger hands-on involvement, and demonstrated ability to troubleshoot or improve models. For the “extensive” range, higher scores mean, for example, leading in AI/ML solution design, contribution to production-grade systems, or ability to optimize performance or scalability.</p>
<p>99. LC 30, Item 6-8, Page 168 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p>	<p>Here, the same qualitative principles apply for all three items. The distinction depends on the scope, autonomy, and complexity of the work performed.</p>

<p>Could you please clarify what constitutes “limited,” “moderate,” and “extensive” experience within the context of each requirement?</p>	<p>Limited experience means basic exposure through coursework, training, or minor tasks under supervision. Moderate experience means independent application in multiple projects, handling standard configurations, deployments, or integrations with some troubleshooting capability. Extensive experience means leadership or architectural responsibility for complex, production-grade systems involving these technologies, including optimization, automation, and integration across environments.</p>
<p>100. LC 30, Item 9, Page 168 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please define what constitutes “limited,” “moderate,” and “extensive” understanding of NATO data security standards, privacy concerns, and secure coding practices?</p>	<p>Limited understanding means basic awareness of general security and privacy principles, but little or no direct experience applying NATO standards. Moderate understanding means practical experience implementing security and privacy measures, such as data classification, access control, encryption, and secure coding within structured (but not necessarily NATO-specific) frameworks. Extensive understanding means demonstrated, hands-on experience applying NATO (or similar) data-security standards, integrating privacy principles, and ensuring compliance through secure coding, audits and accreditation processes.</p>
<p>101. LC 31, Item 6-12, Page 173 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The Essential Qualifications section on page 170 of the SoW lists Items 6–12 as Desirable, while the Requirements Matrix assigns a score of zero for the absence of these qualifications, which effectively makes them mandatory for compliance. Could you please clarify this discrepancy and confirm whether Items 6–12 are considered Essential or Desirable, and whether the absence of a Desirable qualification would result in non-compliance?</p>	<p>See amendment 3</p>
<p>102. LC 32, Item 2, Page 177 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points will be allocated within the 6–20 and 21–35 point ranges and what specific factors will determine the exact score within each range?</p>	<p>Based on the number, scope, applicability, and level of authorship of the products.</p>
<p>103. LC 32, Item 3, Page 177 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify which specific certifications are considered to fall under the category of “Cyber security certificates below CISSP/GSE or CISM”?</p>	<p>Those different than the ones mentioned.</p>
<p>104. LC 33, Item 2, Page 182 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points will be allocated within the 6–20 and 21–35 point ranges and what</p>	<p>Based on the number, scope, applicability, and level of authorship of the products.</p>

<p>specific factors will determine the exact score within each range?</p>	
<p>105. LC 33, Item 3, Page 182 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify which specific certifications are considered to fall under the category of “Cyber security certificates below CISSP/GSE or CISM”?</p>	<p>Those different than the ones mentioned.</p>
<p>106. LC 33, Item 5, Page 183 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>The requirement under Item 5 refers to expert-level certifications (PMP, MSP or PPQ), while the scoring criteria mention NAF/TOGAF. Could you please clarify this discrepancy?</p>	<p>Requirement 5, points range. Where it says “3 years or more without NAF/TOGAF: 3-5 points. 3 years or more with NAF/TOGA: 6-10 points.”, it should say “3 years or more without PMP/MSP/PPQ: 3-5 points. 3 years or more with PMP/MSP/PPQ: 6-10 points.”</p>
<p>107. LC 34, Item 3, Page 187 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points will be allocated within the 2–30 point range for the "Required experience (5years)" category and what specific factors will determine the score within that range?</p>	<p>See amendment 3</p>
<p>108. LC 34, Item 4, Page 188 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify how points will be allocated within the 2–20 point range for the "Yes" category and what specific factors will determine the score within that range?</p>	<p>See amendment 3</p>
<p>109. LC 35, Item 2, Page 192 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether the “Certified for less than 2 years” and “Certified for at least 2 years” scoring criteria refer to certification in ArchiMate, or to certification in an Enterprise Architecture framework such as TOGAF, DoDAF, or Zachman? There is some ambiguity because the scoring range mentions only ArchiMate, while the Item 2 requirement lists TOGAF, Zachman, DoDAF and UAF certifications.</p>	<p>Proficiency in ArchiMate notation is a critical requirement. If the candidate is not proficient in ArchiMate, then certifications in specific frameworks are irrelevant.</p>
<p>110. LC 36, Item 2, Page 199 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>Could you please clarify whether the “Certified for less than 2 years” and “Certified for at least 2 years” scoring criteria refer to certification in ArchiMate or to certification in an Enterprise Architecture framework such as TOGAF, DoDAF, or Zachman? There is some ambiguity because the scoring range mentions only ArchiMate, while the Item 2</p>	<p>Proficiency in ArchiMate notation is a critical requirement. If the candidate is not proficient in ArchiMate, then certifications in specific frameworks are irrelevant.</p>

<p>requirement lists TOGAF, Zachman, DoDAF and UAF certifications.</p>	
<p>111. LC 37, Item 2, Page 204 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>LC 37, Item 2: Could you please clarify whether the “Certified for less than 2 years” and “Certified for at least 2 years” scoring criteria refer to certification in ArchiMate or to certification in an Enterprise Architecture framework such as TOGAF, DoDAF, or Zachman? There is some ambiguity because the scoring range mentions only ArchiMate, while the Item 2 requirement lists TOGAF, Zachman, DoDAF and UAF certifications.</p>	<p>See amendment 3</p>
<p>112. LC 38, Page 209-210 ANNEX A: SOW, IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 Amendment 1</p> <p>LC 38: The Best Value Criteria matrix totals 65 points, however the matrix states that 100 points are possible. Could you please clarify this discrepancy?</p>	<p>It is 100 points – see amendment 3</p>
<p>113. Bidding Instructions - Section 9</p> <p>The bidder would like to request an extension to the bid closing date of 2 weeks.</p>	<p>HQ SACT cannot support a two-week extension of the bidding date due to internal timeline dependencies. The deadline has been extended to 4 November 2025.</p>
<p>114. Reference: Bidding Instructions 4.e.; Clarification Answer 2</p> <p>The bidders assumes that NATO is referring to NATO Directive with reference, AC/35-D/2003-REV5 – Directive on Classified Project & Industrial Security Industrial security, contractor obligations, project security, based on this assumption:</p> <p>Can NATO Identify the requirement which stipulates it is mandatory for a bidder to have an FSC at the same level or higher of the personnel it is delivering when there is no requirement for handling and management of classified materials at NC or above either during the bid phase or the project?</p>	<p>AC/35-D/2003-REV5 – Directive on Classified Project & Industrial Security is the governing instruction.</p> <p>If the bidder does not have an active FSC at the time of bidding and/or there is a national process that precludes issuing an FSC until award, the bidder may indicate this within the proposal in lieu of providing the FSC information.</p> <p>If the bidder is successful, however, any contract award shall be on a provisional basis and final award will not be approved until the NSA/DSA has provided an assurance that the bidder has been granted an FSC at the required level.</p> <p>The bidder is not expected to manage any materials at the facility during the bidding period or project delivery in this case.</p> <p>Bidders are requested to investigate national FSC procedures and advise the anticipated approval timeline within the proposal.</p>
<p>115. Reference: Clarification Answer 3</p> <p>As per reference AC/35-D/2003-REV5 – Directive on Classified Project & Industrial Security Industrial security, contractor obligations, project security, Section 11 (b), if there is no access to classified</p>	<p>See response for 114 above.</p>

<p>information during the bidding period at NC the requirement states “a bidder not holding an appropriate FSC shall not be excluded from the bidding process, but should be advised in the tender document that an FSC shall be required prior to it being awarded the contract/sub-contract;” this is in contradiction to the previously issued clarification, can NATO clarify this matter?</p>	
<p>116. Reference: Bidding Instructions 4.e.; Clarification Answer 2 As per reference AC/35-D/2003-REV5 – Directive on Classified Project & Industrial Security Industrial security, contractor obligations, Programme/Project Security Instruction and Security Aspects Letter section 23, requires a Security Aspect Letter to be distributed as part of the bidding package in the case of classified contracts at NC level or above, this is not currently part of the bid package for this IFB, can you please clarify?</p>	<p>See Enclosure 5 to Amendment 3</p>
<p>117. Could HQ SACT please identify which NATO directive, and associated requirement, governs this Request for Quotation (RFQ) and is referenced by HQ SACT in the Bidding Instructions and the corresponding Q&A responses?</p>	<p>See response 114 above.</p>
<p>118. Each NATO member nation applies its own national regulations for the management of personnel security clearances. For example, in the United Kingdom, an Industrial Personnel Security Assurance (IPSA) accreditation is required to authorize an organization to manage personnel clearances, whereas a Facility Security Clearance (FSC) alone does not suffice. In contrast, other nations (such as Finland) require an FSC to authorize such management. Given these national deviations, would a bidder be authorized to identify the relevant national differences within Enclosure 2, in order to remain compliant with the intent of the current requirement?</p>	<p>Yes, see 114 response above.</p>
<p>119. How does NATO want FSC adjudicated in Matrices? Is there a requirement for the associated code to be made available for the company FSC? Currently, [redacted] is listing compliant in the required grading field.</p>	<p>Please see Enclosure 2: Compliance Statement and initial the applicable statement. This is all that is required during the bidding phase. Bidders will be required to provide the certificate and/or numbers for validation upon provisional award. The final award will not be approved until the NSA/DSA has provided an assurance that the bidder has been granted an FSC at the required level.</p>

<p>120. Throughout the solicitation, there are variations on the naming of the various Labor Categories. Which title is considered the "Official" label for those categories that vary in title (e.g. LC4, LC8, LC21, LC25, LC 26, LC30)?</p>	<p>See Amendment #3</p>
<p>121. NATO grading standard for applicants has traditionally been 70 points. There are several categories with both higher and lower minimums required, are these all correct (e.g. LC5, LC6, LC7, LC10, LC11, LC12, LC13, LC14, LC15, LC16, LC17, LC18, LC19, LC20, LC22, LC27, LC28, LC30)?</p>	<p>Yes. The minimum score for compliance is determined by the COTR and is relevant to the requirement itself.</p>
<p>122. LC3 Grading Criteria #7 specifies specifically support experience to NATO wargaming. Should this be more open as the current wording limits potential applicants? Is National wargaming experience acceptable in this area?</p>	<p>No. We have learned wargaming in NATO is quite different then wargaming for a single Nation and want to award more points for those with specific NATO experience.</p>
<p>123. LC4 Grading Criteria #7 specifies specifically NATO; can this be via other wargaming evolutions? Similar to previous LC3 query</p>	<p>No. We have learned that wargaming in NATO is quite different than wargaming for a single Nation and want to award more points for those with specific NATO experience.</p>
<p>124. LC5 contract award period reflects 2025. Assumption this is for 2026, but will this be a multi-year award?</p>	<p>Yes, POP is 1 Jan 2026 – 31 Dec 2026 with a 4-year option period – see amendment #3</p>
<p>125. LC5 grading matrix only totals 90 available points.</p>	<p>Grading is for 100 points – see amendment #2</p>
<p>126. LC6 Grading Criteria 8. Can a candidate’s experience in a Civilian Strategic Command be accounted for as there are several US Gov organizations that touch Russia and China that interact with Military Strategic Commands? The SOW states Strategic Commands; however, the matrix goes further to specify Military Strategic Commands. Same question applied to LC7.</p>	<p>A Civilian equivalent to a Military Strategic Command may be considered if the justification is clearly articulated and provides evidence of required Political-Military expertise on Russia and China.</p>
<p>127. LC7 contract is set for 1+2 PoP, is this correct?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>128. LC7 also focuses AI experience. Does the focus need to be on Russia or China or ability to assess regional issues, or more focused around strategic reasoning in AI?</p>	<p>Primarily focused on strategic reasoning and the use of AI with the application to strategic, political, military issues – in particular as they related to Russia and China.</p>
<p>129. LC8, please clarify “writing intensive field” degree.</p>	<p>Please see response #28 above.</p>
<p>130. LC9 contract is set for 1+2 PoP, is this correct?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>131. LC 22 requires that a university degree must have 24 credit hours in business/management – is there a requirement to provide a transcript? This requirement has a potential to exclude highly qualified candidates.</p>	<p>A business-related bachelor's degree will be assumed to have the minimum 24 credit hours in business/management. A candidate may qualify with an unrelated degree with < 24 credit hours if he/she holds a procurement / contracting certification as well.</p>
<p>132. LC 22 grading matrix is unclear how proper scoring should be completed. It appears that the total a candidate can score is 90 points. Please clarify if the maximum total in brackets reflects total additional</p>	<p>Yes, these are the two different ways that a candidate can qualify. See Amendment 3 for clarification. Candidates with business related degree will receive 7 points</p>

<p>points to the base number (e.g. 4 yrs = 3 pts + 1 pt for each additional year (max 6 pts) - is these 6 totals or 9 total pts).</p>	<p>(Bachelors) / 15 points (Masters) AND additional points for any DAWIA certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p> <p>Candidates with non-related degrees will receive 4 points (Bachelors) / 10 points (Masters) AND additional points for DAWIA level certification or equivalent up to a total of 25 points.</p>
<p>133. LC27 has a maximum of 110 points, is this correct?</p>	<p>Yes – this is intentional</p>
<p>134. LC37 appears to be a duplicate of LC24. Is the request for 2 Enterprise Architects to support the Requirement and Architecture Management Office or 1?</p>	<p>L37 and L24 were duplicates made in error. L24 is now for 2 candidates – see amendment #3</p>
<p>135. LC38 grading matrix only has 65 points total.</p>	<p>It is 100 points – see amendment #2</p>
<p>136. Labor Category 4, Page 37, Item 7 – Extensive experience is listed in the matrix, but given the current wargaming contract was 3 years and was a new contract, can NATO change the matrix to have Moderate Experience be 1-2 years and Extensive Experience be 3+ years or to be even more accurate, change it to the number of events?</p>	<p>No. We are not building this solely on the existence of the previous contract. There were NATO wargames that took place prior to the previous 3-year contract being in place.</p>
<p>137. Can Bidders submit a partial number of resources for a given category (e.g., 6 of the maximum 11 Full-Stack Developers under Category 11, remote), or is it mandatory to submit all resources for each category?</p>	<p>Partial submissions will be accepted</p>
<p>138. In the event that the individual selected for a position following a tender process declines the offer, is it possible to replace them with a candidate who has a similar score?</p>	<p>No. The contract award will be contingent upon the candidate’s continued availability. If the candidate declines the offer, HQ SACT will rescind the award and move to the candidate/company with the next highest combined score.</p>
<p>139. If the team is currently working for ACT iHUB, can they be submitted for a new tender, or is it necessary to obtain approval?</p>	<p>They may be submitted without approval since the contract will end before the start of 26-02.</p>
<p>140. Could you please confirm that if a contractor proposes people for off-site positions who do not have access to the NATO network and, it is not required to have an FSC at the time of submitting the offer and awarding the contract.</p>	<p>Confirmed. The FSC requirement is not applicable to remote contractors with no security clearance requirement.</p>
<p>141. Could you please confirm that a declaration of eligibility (DoE) issued by local authorities is not required for this tender procedure?</p>	<p>Confirmed. A DOE is preferred but not required.</p>
<p>142. Which Labour Categories already have incumbents working in post?</p>	<p>LC 1 – 4,, 8, 10-18, 21 (1 of 4), 22, 25-26</p>
<p>143. Clarification for LC 16 - Specifically, could ACT confirm whether a university degree is mandatory for the position? Alternatively, would a specific number of years of relevant experience in a comparable role be accepted as an equivalent qualification?</p>	<p>The degree is not mandatory for the position, but it is mandatory to obtain 5 points for that criterion. It does not say that it may be replaced with experience. So, experience does not count in this case.</p>

144. Are there expectations for travel to Norfolk, VA, or other NATO sites for remote positions?	Travel is possible but not anticipated. Travel will be funded separately via the contractor travel request process.
145. If the IFIB is amended after questions are submitted, will there be an additional Q&A period?	We will consider all follow up questions but cannot guarantee a response for those received < 5 working days prior to bidding deadline
146. LC1 - Will NATO provide the necessary software and tools for contractor use, or are contractors expected to supply their own? If contractors are required to furnish their own, what specific functionalities and capabilities are expected to meet NATO's operational and technical standards?	NATO will provide.
147. Are there any restrictions on the use of open-source software or cloud platforms for AI/ML development?	The use of open-source software and cloud platforms for AI/ML development at NATO HQ SACT is governed by NATO security policy and network accreditation. While technical proficiency with these tools is a necessary skill, authorization to use them depends entirely on the classification level of the activity and the data involved. In practice, this means that work conducted on classified networks or with classified data generally requires the use of NATO-accredited tools, libraries, and infrastructures that meet security and data-handling requirements.
148. Is there a preferred CI/CD toolchain or provider for DevSecOps roles?	Gitlab and AWS are preferred
149. Section 11 defines that bidders must request approval from HQ SACT in advance of submission before proposing a candidate serving on another HQ SACT. What is the deadline of submitting our request? Is the term "candidate" referring to companies OR individuals that are working or previously worked with HQ SACT?	Requests must be received by a minimum of one week prior to the bidding deadline. Candidate refers to the proposed individual
150. Labor Category 25 does not have an associated requirements matrix, while all the other labor categories do. Is this role intentionally exempt from compliance requirements?	See amendment #2
151. Should the signature block labelled "Name/Signature of Authorized Company Official" on Enclosure 3 be signed by the contracting organization or the client organization?	This should be signed by the company official submitting the bidding package or authorising the submission
152. If the prime contractor holds a valid Facility Security Clearance (FSC), is the subcontractor also required to obtain an FSC to participate in the contract, or can they operate under the prime's clearance?	Subcontractors must hold its own FSC at the required level by the contract.
153. How will the work be awarded, on which level? Can it be awarded to one party? Or will categories be grouped (like wargaming & exercises; Strategic Foresight, Policy & Analysis; Software Development & Digital Engineering, Architecture), or even on LC level?	Each requirement stands alone and may be awarded separately, for example if a labour category calls for 4 personnel; 1-4 separate awards are possible).
154. Is it possible to deploy part of the proposed team for this assignment from outside the United States. Given that 25 of the 30 labour categories are listed as Norfolk-based, this poses a challenge under current U.S.	No. Categories identified as remote are the only ones authorised for remote working, and hybrid arrangements will not be considered.

<p>visa and work-permit regulations.</p> <p>Could ACT please confirm whether it would be acceptable to implement a hybrid delivery model, whereby some key personnel would be periodically present on-site in Norfolk (e.g., during key workshops, reviews, or coordination sessions), while continuing to perform parts of their duties remotely from outside the U.S.?</p> <p>A local hub in Norfolk can ensure close coordination and communication with ACT staff, supported by secure digital collaboration tools and video-conferencing links to maintain seamless daily interaction.</p>	<p>HQ SACT has not seen any major challenges or delays for its European suppliers seeking the NATO Visa status for their candidates.</p>
<p>155. Is it acceptable to submit one CV for multiple labor categories?</p>	<p>Yes – however if the candidate is successful in more than one labour category, HQ SACT reserves the right to select which one to award.</p>
<p>156. Given the limitation of office/desk space at ACT, will there be a hybrid onsite work schedule for the positions?</p>	<p>No – ACT will ensure workspace availability</p>
<p>157. Can you confirm if NATO-furnished equipment (e.g., laptops) will be provided to the selected candidates?</p>	<p>NATO Furnished equipment will be provided for the on-site candidates</p>
<p>158. For remote contractors requiring a security clearance, will the Contractor's Company need to hold a Facilities Security Clearance (FSC) at NATO or National SECRET or above to perform the work?</p>	<p>Remote contractors do not require a security clearance</p>
<p>159. Can it be identified the specific NATO directive (Document Reference) and therein the specific reference (Section/Para) where it states, in one form or another the statement referenced in IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 PART A – Q&A #1, Question 2, Answer. “Requirement to have a Facilities Security Clearance equal to that of the on-site candidate is a mandatory criterion imposed by NATO Security Policy”</p>	<p>See Q4 response above.</p>
<p>160. Can it further be clarified in the context of the statement from IFIB-ACT-SACT-26-02 PART A – Q&A #1, Question 2, Answer. “Requirement to have a Facilities Security Clearance equal to that of the on-site candidate is a mandatory criterion imposed by NATO Security Policy” that the onsite refers to the designated NATO premises identified per LC?</p>	<p>See Q4 response above</p>
<p>161. Can the following be confirmed if there will be a need or requirement for the bidders to Manage, generate, or have access to NATO classified information up to the level of NATO Secret material on their premises in the delivery of support under this contract. If so, can this need be identified in the RFQ, or conversely can it be identified that there is no specific need at this time to manage generate or have access to NATO classified</p>	<p>See Q4 response above.</p>

<p>information up to the level of NATO Secret or higher on their premises in the delivery of support under this contract.</p>	
<p>162. Can the Security Aspects Letter (SAL) be provided by ACT as part of the bidding package in support of the FSC requirement for this contract</p>	<p>See Amendment 3</p>
<p>163. LC20 IFIB Amendment 1 Page 2 and Page 112; Excel Pricing Spreadsheet Line 62. Labor Category 20: IFIB PDF page 2 states On-site at HQ SACT, but Page 112 states Remote and Excel pricing spreadsheet shows On-site at HQ SACT; can you please confirm if the location for LCAT 20 is remote or on-site?</p>	<p>This position is remote</p>
<p>164. For Labor Categories where there is more than one candidate required, do you only need 1 Past Performance Citation? i.e. for Labor Category 11, you only need one Citation rather than 11?</p>	<p>Past performance citations are relevant to the company rather than the proposed candidates.</p>
<p>165. Can we request a one-week extension to the submission deadline please?</p>	<p>HQ SACT is under pressure to award these requirements as soon as possible and has a project plan to accomplish this. A full week extension is not possible. Deadline will be extended until 5 November 25 – See Amendment #2</p>
<p>166. Labor Category 4, Page 37, Item 7 – Extensive experience is listed in the matrix, but given the current wargaming contract was 3 years and was a new contract, can NATO change the matrix to have Moderate Experience be 1-2 years and Extensive Experience be 3+ years or to be even more accurate, change it to the number of events?</p>	<p>No. We are not building this solely on the existence of the previous contract. There were NATO wargames that took place prior to the previous 3-year contract being in place.</p>
<p>167. For positions, LC-24, LC-35, LC-36, and LC-37, ArchiMate experience is required. Would NATO consider accepting equivalent enterprise architecture tool expertise where the tool (e.g., Cameo Enterprise Architecture) supports ArchiMate 3.x notation/viewpoints and produces similar, conformant artifacts and exchanges?</p>	<p>Proficiency in ArchiMate notation is a critical requirement. If the candidate is not proficient in ArchiMate, then certifications in specific frameworks are irrelevant.</p>
<p>168. For positions LC-24, LC-35, LC-36, and LC-37, please confirm if a candidate has ArchiMate but does not have a certification; they would not receive any points for that criterion, but are not considered non-compliant.</p>	<p>Correct</p>