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



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

This document contains a Request for Information (RFI) call to industry, academia and nations for their input to NATO's requirement for testing the implementation and performance of Innovation Continuum 2026

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

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
 HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
 RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

General Information	
Request For Information No.	25-112
Project Title	Innovation Continuum 2026
Due date for questions concerning related information	09:00 am EST 16 January 2026
Due date for submission of requested information	09:00 am EST 30 January 2026
Contracting Office Address	NATO, HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) Purchasing & Contracting Suite 100 7857 Blandy Rd, Norfolk, VA, 23511-2490
Contracting Points of Contact	Mr Robert Friend Email: robert.friend@nato.int Tel: +1-757-747-4433 Ms. Catherine Giglio E-mail: catherine.giglio@act.nato.int Tel:+1 757 747 3856
Technical Points of Contact	Name: LCDR (OF-3) Jasper Don e-mail : jasper.don@nato.int Tel : +1 757 747 3653 Name: Mr. Krzysztof Skurzak e-mail: krzysztof.skurzak@nato.int Tel : +1 757 747 3206
All request for clarifications, questions and responses to this RFI must be sent via email to all Points of Contact reported above. Individual emails will not be accepted and should not be sent. Contracting and Technical POCs must be included in any correspondence.	

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

1. INTRODUCTION

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to engage with industry, academia and nations¹ to understand state-of-the-art Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs) and innovative projects that could have a positive impact on Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) and/or Digital Transformation (DT) initiatives of ACT, thereby contributing to the advancement of NATO's Military Instrument of Power.

This Request for Information (RFI) does not constitute a commitment to issue a future request for proposal (RFP). Following the conclusion of this RFI HQ SACT will not award a contract with any respondents from non-NATO Nations which are part of NATO Science & Technology Organisations (STO) Science & Technology (S&T) Enhanced Partnership (STEP)². The purpose of this request is to foster collaboration with industry and evaluate future capabilities related to the implementation of MDO and DT through the NATO Defence Planning Process and/or NATO's Rapid Adoption Action Plan.

If the response to this RFI includes more than one innovative project, ACT reserves the right to select none, all, or a subset of the proposed solutions. Typical solutions offered within the Innovation Continuum are expected to fall within Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) ranging from 4 to 9, based on the NASA TRL³ scale.

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

2. BACKGROUND

Emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) are transforming daily life and security, offering new opportunities for NATO to enhance effectiveness, resilience, and sustainability while posing significant threats from state and non-state actors. NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept recognizes these dual aspects, committing Allies to promote innovation, increase investments in EDTs, and protect innovation ecosystems to maintain military superiority. NATO's "Foster and Protect" strategy, endorsed in 2021, focuses on developing dual-use technologies and safeguarding against hostile use of EDTs. Key initiatives include the Defence Innovation

¹ In addition to all NATO Nation this RFI is additionally open to all Nations under NATO's Science & Technology Organization (STO) Science & Technology (S&T) Enhanced Partnership (STEP) programme.

² This includes the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Ukraine, Australia and Japan.

Reference: <https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/03/19/the-republic-of-korea-joins-nato-science-amp-technology-organization-sto-partnership>.

³ Technology Readiness Levels - <https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/somd/space-communications-navigation-program/technology-readiness-levels/>

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) and NATO Innovation Fund, which support start-ups and foster transatlantic cooperation on critical technologies.

NATO's innovation efforts focus on nine priority areas: artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, quantum technologies, biotechnology, space, hypersonic systems, novel materials, energy, and next-generation communications.

NATO recognizes the importance of collaboration and actively engages with the public and private sectors, academia, and civil society, placing particular emphasis on industry involvement, especially with start-ups. At the 2025 Hague NATO Summit, member nations reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening transatlantic defense industrial cooperation. The summit declaration emphasized the need to *"rapidly expand transatlantic defense industrial cooperation and harness emerging technologies and the spirit of innovation to advance our collective security."* Nations declared to *"work to eliminate defense trade barriers among Allies and leverage our partnerships to promote defense industrial cooperation."* Innovation Continuum 2026 supports NATO's ambition by offering the platform to advancing technological innovation through collaboration and cooperation.

Finally, the 2026 edition of the Innovation Continuum defines eight specific themes to accelerate NATO's Rapid Adoption Action Plan and NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Centre (JATEC) initiatives. These themes include:

- AI Audacious Training
- Layered Counter-UAS Initiative
- Next Generation Targeting
- Smart Logistics and Sustainment
- Electronic Warfare
- AI Next Gen C4ISR
- Cognitive Warfare
- Cyber Resilience

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

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1. Vision

Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is executing a comprehensive Innovation program that encompasses both traditional Science and Technology efforts and Open Innovation initiatives. Over the past years, the number of projects within this program has steadily

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASBLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

increased, and the delivery of valuable outcomes would not have been possible without the active involvement of academia and industry from NATO nations.

In 2025, ACT successfully concluded the 2025 edition of the Innovation Continuum, conducting over 70 experimentations and demonstrations that leveraged Emerging and Disruptive Technologies. These activities attracted more than 700 participants and directly supported key NATO initiatives such as Multi-Domain Operations and Digital Transformation, proving to be highly effective. Industry and academia played a critical role in the success of these efforts. The doubling of activities compared to 2025 reflects the expanding innovation efforts at ACT and across the broader NATO ecosystem, including DIANA, the Science and Technology Organization (STO), the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA), the Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE), and other NATO bodies.

ACT's vision for the Innovation Continuum is to provide a scalable framework that accelerates the delivery of innovative solutions to the military community through experimentation and demonstration. ACT aims to foster effective collaboration on innovation projects across NATO and member nations to support the development of future warfare capabilities. The framework also seeks to identify interoperability risks and opportunities, while orchestrating innovation initiatives across NATO and its member nations to enhance synergies and knowledge sharing.

The 2026 events under this framework will focus on advancing Multi-Domain Operations and Digital Transformation through the application of emerging technologies, further reinforcing NATO's commitment to innovation and adaptability in addressing evolving security challenges.

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

3.2. Objectives

The 2026 INNOVATION CONTINUUM will be structured around four sequential phases: scoping, designing, validation, and evaluation (demonstration/experimentation) (Figure 1).

Each phase will culminate in milestone event as outlined below:

- **SPARK Event** (scoping) - to be conducted in Bulgaria, 24-26 February 2026;
- **IGNITE Event** (designing)- to be conducted in Poland, 5-7 May 2026;
- **GLOW Event** (validation) - to be conducted in Canada, 1-3 September 2026;
- **SHINE Event** (evaluation) - to be conducted in Canada, 5-9 October 2026.



Figure 1. Innovation Continuum Milestone Events

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

The primary focus of the 2026 Innovation Continuum will be Multi-Domain Operations and Digital Transformation, powered by Emerging and Disruptive Technologies, with special emphasis on the following themes.

- **AI Audacious Training** – In response to an increasingly complex and contested global security environment, NATO must continually adapt its training and exercise programs to ensure readiness and strategic advantage. Audacious Training represents a bold shift from traditional, static, and evaluation-driven exercises to a dynamic, realistic, and operationally demanding training paradigm. ACT welcomes proposals on how Emerging and Disruptive Technology (EDT)-based, innovative solutions can support this concept by enhancing realism to better replicate modern conflict conditions. These solutions should also support the collection, analysis, and application of lessons learned from both exercises and real-world operations to drive continuous improvement across the Alliance.
- **Layered Counter-UxS Initiative** – With the proliferation of unmanned threats across air, surface, subsurface, and land domains, ACT is exploring how EDTs can transform NATO's capacity to detect, track, and neutralize such systems in challenging operational environments. AI-driven multi-sensor fusion, quantum-enhanced detection, and edge processing could accelerate threat classification and targeting. Meanwhile, advanced electronic warfare, directed-energy weapons, and autonomous interceptors offer scalable and cost-effective engagement solutions. Resilient, cyber-secure architectures, open-systems integration, and digital twin technologies will be critical to ensuring adaptability, interoperability, and sustained effectiveness of counter-unmanned systems (C-UxS) capabilities across the full spectrum of missions.
- **Next Generation Targeting** – ACT is investigating how EDTs can enhance the speed, precision, and resilience of NATO's Joint Targeting processes. As the targeting environment grows increasingly complex—driven by dispersed, mobile, and multi-domain threats—EDTs such as AI-enabled data fusion, autonomous ISR platforms, and advanced sensing technologies (e.g., hyperspectral and quantum sensors) could enable faster target identification, more accurate geolocation, and improved collateral damage estimation. These advancements have the potential to shorten the sensor-to-shooter timeline, improve decision-making under time pressure, and ensure targeting effectiveness in contested or denied environments.
- **Smart Logistics and Sustainment** – ACT aims to develop resilient, modular, and autonomous logistics systems capable of delivering supplies and sustaining frontline operations in contested and high-threat environments. Proposals should explore how EDTs can enhance logistics efficiency, adaptability, and survivability, ensuring NATO forces remain operationally effective even in the most challenging conditions.

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

- **Electronic Warfare** – Spectrum dominance is a critical component of modern warfare. ACT is focused on deployable electronic warfare (EW) suites that integrate seamlessly with battle management systems, providing anti-GNSS/spoofing resilience, advanced direction-finding, and rapid countermeasure packages. These solutions must be tailored for both fixed and mobile forces, ensuring NATO maintains an edge across diverse operational scenarios.
- **AI Next Gen C4ISR** – Future AI-enabled warfare systems will revolutionize situational awareness and command-and-control functions, offering a more autonomous and efficient approach to decision-making processes. Early adoption of AI within NATO has already demonstrated significant potential, and it is crucial to address this opportunity promptly. Autonomy in the modern theater, combined with an increased tempo of actions, will require innovative approaches to visualization, human-machine interaction, and effects synchronization to maintain a strategic advantage.
- **Cognitive Warfare** – The battle for influence over minds is becoming increasingly significant in modern warfare, and EDTs play a pivotal role in this domain. Responsible and mission-driven management of this space is critical for future operations. Areas of interest include automation on social media platforms, detection and countering of fake news and deep fakes, and other tools to safeguard NATO's strategic communication efforts. Cognitive warfare will be a defining element of future conflicts, requiring innovative and ethical approaches to address emerging challenges.
- **Cyber Resilience** - Cyber resilience is essential as NATO embraces the rapid evolution of next-generation networks, including 6G, Satellite Communications, and cloud-edge architectures, alongside the increasing use of AI and autonomy in cyber operations. These advancements unlock new opportunities but also introduce challenges, particularly with the advent of quantum computing, which threatens existing encryption systems. Sustaining resilience of ICT infrastructure will require ongoing evaluation and the implementation of a cohesive, EDT-enabled cyber resilience concept to address these emerging risks effectively.

Industry and academia are encouraged to submit catalogues showcasing their most innovative research and development efforts with potential transformative military applications, including those directly supporting the topics listed above. ACT will review these submissions and invite selected organizations to participate in the 2026 Innovation Continuum. For the most promising proposals, ACT may provide enhanced collaboration opportunities through targeted projects under the Framework for Collaborative Interaction (FFCI) and facilitate streamlined transitions to rapid adoption activities.

3.3 Expected Benefits to Respondents

Active participation in the 2026 Innovation Continuum will provide stakeholders with a deeper understanding of NATO's approach to Multi-Domain Operations and Digital Transformation, while offering an opportunity to positively influence ongoing projects within ACT's innovation portfolio. Furthermore, their proposals may be selected for participation in events aimed at accelerating innovation for military communities. For the most promising proposals, there may be opportunities for deeper collaboration through

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

focused projects and an expedited path to rapid adoption. Overall, involvement in the Innovation Continuum has the potential to foster valuable partnerships and contribute to significant defence innovation efforts.

3.4 Expected Benefits to NATO

The submitted proposals have the potential to deliver solutions that accelerate innovation within NATO's military communities. Promising proposals may lead to deeper collaboration through focused projects, supporting NATO in advancing Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) and Digital Transformation (DT). The evaluation criteria will also enable NATO to identify technologies and research that offer opportunities to enhance its capabilities. Overall, the RFI process aims to generate valuable innovation and input to inform NATO's defence modernization efforts, including but not limited to rapid adoption initiatives.

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

4. REQUESTED INFORMATION

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

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

4.2. Eligibility to Respond:

NATO Nations, Industry and Academia that originate or are chartered/incorporated within NATO Nations and NATO Science & Technology Organisations (STO) Science & Technology (S&T) Enhanced Partnership (STEP)⁴ are eligible to respond to this RFI.

4.3. Response Template:

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

4.3.2. Respondents can collaborate with other providers, but all companies/organizations must be clearly identified and their role/services clearly stated.

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

- a) **Description of the innovative solution**, detailing its operational relevance and value.
- b) **Feasibility** of the solution, both operationally and technically, within a military organization.
- c) **Novelty of the solution**, specifically in terms of the adoption of Emerging and Disruptive Technologies.
- d) **Technology Readiness Level (TRL)** of the solution.
- e) **Recommendations** for accelerating the implementation of the solution.
- f) **Additional Information** as expected per Qualification Procedure (Paragraph 7.)

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

4.3.5. Available product brochures, specification sheets, photographs, illustration and technical descriptions that describe your company's current services are welcome. Companies are encouraged not to include marketing informational materials that do not relate to the services described in this RFI as it will be discarded; however,

⁴ This includes the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Ukraine, Australia and Japan.

Reference: <https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/03/19/the-republic-of-korea-joins-nato-science-amp-technology-organization-sto-partnership>.

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

responses may include URL links to technical documentation materials (i.e., technical data sheets for products) are welcome.

4.3.6. Submissions should be done through the online questionnaire provided at the beginning of the RFI.

4.3.7. Responses shall not be classified above NATO UNCLASSIFIED.

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

4.4. Response Due Date

Responses to this RFI must be received by **9:00 am EST 30 January 2026**. The responses shall not contain any classified information. HQ SACT reserves the right to seek clarification on submissions.

5. CLARIFICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Inquiries of a technical nature about this RFI shall be submitted by e-mail solely to the aforementioned POCs by 9:00am EST 16 January 2026. Accordingly, questions in an e-mail shall not contain proprietary and/or classified information. Answers will be posted as soon as possible on the HQ SACT P&C website at: <https://www.act.nato.int/opportunities/contracting/>.

All questions should be submitted by **9:00am EST 16 January 2026** to allow for appropriate response time prior to the **9:00am EST 30 January 2026** response due date.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

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

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

6.2. Organizational Conflicts of Interest.

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

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

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

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

6.3. Handling of Proprietary Information

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

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

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

a) To its employees, officers, directors, contractors, and affiliates of the recipient who have a need to know and who have an organizational code of conduct or written agreement with the recipient requiring them to treat the disclosed Proprietary Information in accordance with nondisclosure principles and the NDA (if executed).

b) To the extent required by law, however, the company receiving the information will give HQ SACT prompt notice to allow HQ SACT a reasonable opportunity to obtain a protective order or otherwise protect the disclosed information through legal process that is:

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

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

7. QUALIFICATION PROCEDURE

Due to the expected high volume of applicants and the limited available time slots at the “2026 Innovation Continuum”, ACT staff have established a selection process. To ensure the transparency and fairness of the process for participating organizations, HQ SACT will use the following criteria when evaluating submissions:

1. Does the proposed solution demonstrate a clear ability to address NATO’s strategic priorities, including Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), Digital Transformation (DT)?
2. Is the solution directly supporting one or more of 9 EDTs, and 8 Innovation Continuum 2026 themes?
3. Is the proposed solution at a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) appropriate for demonstration, testing, or deployment within a military or operational context?
4. Are there validated use cases, pilot studies, or demonstrations that showcase the effectiveness and reliability of the proposed solution in relevant scenarios?
5. Has the institution demonstrated a history of successfully developing and delivering innovative or disruptive technologies to the market or operational environments?
6. Does the solution integrate seamlessly with NATO’s existing systems, technologies, and operational frameworks, ensuring interoperability across domains?
7. Does the solution have intellectual property protection, such as patents, copyrights, or trademarks?

NATO UNCLASSIFIED RELEASABLE TO THE INTERNET
HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
RFI-ACT-SACT-25-112

8. SUMMARY

This is an RFI only. The purpose of this RFI is to involve industry, academia and nations through collaboration, for their input to NATO's requirement for Innovation Continuum 2026. HQ SACT has not made a commitment to procure any of the items described herein, and release of this RFI shall not be construed as such a commitment, nor as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement will be required or sought. **It is emphasised that this is an RFI, and not an RFP of any kind.**