**Section 1 – Objectives**

* 1. The objectives of this Request for Information (RFI) are to help the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Defence Artificial Intelligence Centre (DAIC) to:

* + 1. Support the development and decision making around the future delivery model for Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Labelling capability within MOD, including in-house/outsource boundaries;
		2. Understand the current marketplace for AI Data Labelling capability;
		3. Make Suppliers aware of the current strategic direction that MOD is pursuing in relation to AI Data Labelling capability, and how it aligns with the current [Defence Artificial Intelligence Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-artificial-intelligence-strategy/defence-artificial-intelligence-strategy); and

1.1.4.        Support MOD in preparing to hold an early market engagement event during the first quarter of 2025.

**Section 2 - Background**

**About DAIC**

* 1. Our vision is that, in terms of AI, UK Defence will become the world’s most effective, efficient, trusted and influential Defence organisation for its size.
	2. The DAIC was established by the Integrated Review in 2021 and first began operations in 2022 and is a part of MOD. Our purpose is to enable and accelerate ambitious, safe, and responsible AI adoption across UK Defence for strategic advantage.
	3. We work collaboratively with international partners, academia, industry and across government to:
* Understand and cohere AI initiatives across Defence through a complex network of internal stakeholders.
* Enable widespread AI adoption through the provision of central products and services.
* Explore, deliver, integrate and scale AI-enabled solutions at every classification.
* Inform and inspire the development of safe and responsible Defence AI capabilities through national and international partnerships.

* 1. The [DAIC AI Playbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-artificial-intelligence-ai-playbook) provides further useful information for industry to consider when collaborating with Defence on AI deployment.

**Data Labelling Service Definition**

* 1. In the context of this potential opportunity, Data Labelling is adding labels/tags to data so that machine learning (ML) models can be trained to identify specific content. Data Labelling adds context to raw data to improve the accuracy of the resulting ML models e.g. labelling objects in an image/video or entities in text. Data Labelling helps to reduce ambiguity and ensure ML models are consistent in their outputs and improves the reliability of future labelling activity. Better Data Labelling capability will allow for improved data driven decision making as well as supporting wider AI capability enhancement.
	2. Within MOD, it is likely that the AI Data Labelling capability will be required by both civilian staff and regular forces across different government security classifications (OFFICIAL, SECRET, TOP SECRET).

**Data Labelling Current Situation**

* 1. Currently, the AI Data Labelling processes within MOD are ineffective and inefficient as capabilities are siloed, time consuming and inconsistent. The workforce has a mixture of Crown Servants/Contractors delivering this capability for specific business areas across varying classification levels.

**Data Labelling Capability Vision**

* 1. With regards to the AI Data Labelling capability, MOD’s vision is that:

*“We will establish an AI Data Labelling capability, empowering the rapid development and deployment of AI solutions across Defence by providing tooling and a trusted network of partners to label, enrich and analyse diverse data modalities at speed and scale.*

*This AI Data Labelling capability will fuel the development of AI models, delivering faster insights, enhanced situational awareness, and a decisive operational advantage for a safer and more secure future.”*

**Section 3 – Data Labelling High-Level Functional/Non-Functional Requirements**

* 1. MOD is currently undergoing an exercise to determine the delivery model for the AI Data Labelling requirement which may or may not result in a decision to outsource the services in-scope. As part of this exercise, MOD is considering the role and responsibilities it wishes to hold in any future delivery model. Whilst some capability is already outsourced, any new contract(s) would essentially represent 'first generation outsourcing' for this capability i.e. the first time MOD has outsourced the AI Data Labelling capability at scale.
	2. Work is underway to determine potential user numbers and requirements and MOD may look to procure an enterprise-wide solution including all related agencies and public bodies.
	3. MOD is keen to engage with small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) as part of this process and strongly recommends SMEs provide their feedback.
	4. In terms of high-level, initial functional and non-functional requirements for the AI Data Labelling capability, these are provided below. These requirements are not exhaustive nor representative of any final requirements should MOD outsource this capability.

*Functional requirements*

* The Supplier(s) shall be capable of:

* + providing AI Data Labelling capabilities across different data types or 'modalities', the main being but not limited to:
		- Text
		- Image
		- Audio
		- Video
		- Time Series

* + providing AI Data Labelling capabilities in line with best practice around ethics, safety, bias mitigation and data privacy standards.
	+ delivering Service Integration where required with existing data management systems, tools etc.
	+ supporting multiple users across all levels of classification.
	+ providing data labelling outputs to users in a timely and cost-effective manner.

*Non-Functional requirements*

* The Supplier(s) shall be capable of:

* + collaborative working within multi skilled teams made of people from several organisations.
	+ scaling to handle an increase/decrease in data volumes and number of users.
	+ adapting to support changes related to business intent, innovation and new modalities.
	+ aligning their solution with the current [Defence Artificial Intelligence Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-artificial-intelligence-strategy/defence-artificial-intelligence-strategy).
	+ providing evidence of quality assurance.

* The Service must be auditable for compliance purposes.
* The Service must be delivered by appropriately security cleared personnel (likely SC/DV clearance depending on Data Labelling requirement).
* The entirety of the Service must be delivered on-shore within the UK including data hosting and personnel provision.

* 1. Please refer to the**functional and non-functional requirements outlined in 3.4** when answering **questions 13 and 14 of the RFI** (please see 'Section 4 – RFI Questions' for more details on providing a response to this RFI).

**Section 4 – RFI Questions**

* 1. Please use the following link to access and respond to **all questions** which form part of your RFI response: [Data Labelling - Supplier RFI](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=7WB3vlNZS0iuldChbfoJ5bDgWz3O4nlDkMgFP_WWqqZURDJCOTlORDhQSzZKMlc4TkcxVlRINTJINi4u).
	2. Any issues accessing or responding to the questions, please contact the Buyer Contact listed within the Contracts Finder Notice.

**Section 5 – Early Market Engagement Day Expression of Interest (EOI)**

* 1. MOD currently plans to hold an Early Market Engagement Day during the first quarter of 2025 and is also seeking expressions of interest (EOI) to attending this event. Further information regarding this event will be issued in the first quarter of 2025.
	2. The Early Market Engagement Day will be used to test the current thinking around delivery models and garner ideas/feedback from the market on any potential procurement, transition and delivery.