

Description/ Requirement:

The Authority is issuing this RFI to understand the availability, capability, and competitiveness of solutions for the provision of the below indicative requirement. The anticipated contract length is approximately 5 years with a potential option to extend.

Indicative Requirement – Fleet Helicopter Support Unit (FHSU)

The user requires a contracted crewed capability that can provide a medium-lift maritime Support Helicopter (SH) capability to support tasking by day and night and in all weather conditions within the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) South Coast Exercise Areas (SCXAs) and wider UK Flight Information Region (FIR).

In addition to the principal task of transporting personnel and/or freight to, from and between ships at sea in the SCXAs for FOST, a further two requirements are under consideration for inclusion within the future FHSU contract:

- Provision of land-based maritime airborne Search and Rescue (SAR) service for Maritime Counter Terrorism (MCT) Force Generation training. This would encompass supporting up to six (6) UK based exercises per year, each of up to one (1) week duration in two calendar blocks occurring in Spring and Autumn each year and requiring up to 24hrs flying per exercise. This requires an assured ability to search for and recover individual persons from the sea at night, with an additional emphasis on being able to deliver them rapidly to specialist medical care in a timely manner.
- A further emerging requirement may be to transport personnel and/or freight to the Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) carrier and other UK based RN shipping based around an initial utilisation of circa 100hrs/yr.

Both these additional requirements are to be confirmed by Final Business Case (FBC).

The required service will meet the following parameters:

- **Performance:** Able to provide a range of 200 nm at full load. Have an internal load capacity of 500 kg, volume 1-1.5 m3 (able to accommodate a stretcher casualty) or 6 pax (including baggage and personal safety equipment) and with an external Underslung Load (USL) capacity of up to 1000 kg. Able to provide Search and Rescue (SAR) support with 2.5 hrs on task endurance. The aircraft used must be fitted with an appropriate hoist (permanent or role fit) suitable for use during SAR recovery of casualties via single and double lift technique and to conduct single stretcher lift into cabin.
- **Environment:** Able to operate day and night overwater, all year and in the full range of UK FIR environmental conditions. Ability to achieve Maritime Status (MARSTAT) 1 capability as defined by Def Stan 00-133 (defined below).
- **Availability:** Sufficient air systems and enabling equipment in place to complete tasking to include up to two task lines (one of which provides guaranteed maritime tasking and the other provides contingent maritime tasking that is subject to periods of maintenance) able to

achieve output of up to 700 hr/yr flying time based on a core of 350hrs/year and priced thresholds beyond.

- **Integration:** Able to operate to/from all RN and International Partner aviation capable platforms¹ without constraint to the routine operation of the platform and all other cleared air and aviation. The Authority will look to utilise, as far as is practicable, a generic Ship Helicopter Operating Limit (SHOL) that permits safe, efficient activity across all required ships with the minimum of differences. Please note this includes a requirement for maritime SQEP pilots.
- **Connectivity:** Able to integrate with all civil (UK/EU) and NATO Maritime, Land and Air communications and navigation requirements in support of tasking.
- **Deployable:** To operate from a contractor designated Main Operating Base (MOB) to provide the required service in the primary operations area of the SCXAs utilising the FOST designated Helicopter Landing Sites (HLS) of Kinterbury Point and HMS RALEIGH. Able to deploy for 2-7 full days (excluding transit) away from MOB to a designated Forward Operating Base (FOB) without engineering support for operations elsewhere in the UK FIR.
- **Regulation:** Fully compliant with applicable UK civil and military air and maritime regulations.
- The service will be commercially operated (contractor owned, operated and maintained) with the air system held on the military register.

RFI Intended Outcomes

This RFI aims to achieve the following three (3) outcomes:

1. Align the Authority's requirement and expectations with Industry's ability to deliver a replacement FHSU capability in the required timeframe.
2. Understand potential synergies and efficiencies between the core FOST task and delivery of airborne SAR for MCT training and/or support to QEC and UK-based shipping.
3. Develop a procurement strategy to deliver a replacement FHSU by March 2024.

Assuming a Contract Award date of 31 Oct 23:

- **The Initial Operating capability (IOC)** is assumed to be delivered by 31 March 2024 and will sustain 1 maritime Task Line at specified availability for the SCXAs only, with support to obtaining appropriate Ship Air Release (SA-R) and HOSTAC clearances to enable pax and stores transfers to specified ship classes. The Authority currently assumes that proposed aircraft are cleared across each of ship classes in an iterative manner before FOC. The initial focus of this effort shall be Type 23 and Type 45.

¹ Including T23, T45, OPV B2, AOR, AO(WAVE), AO(TIDE), PCRS, LPD, QEC, FSS, and suitable Allied ships using HOSTAC SHOL IAW MPP-02. There is an intention to include future platforms such as T26 and T31 in due course.

- **The Full Operating Capability (FOC)** is assumed to be delivered by 31 March 2025 and will be deliver the totality of the capability outlined above, with all appropriate Ship Air Release (SA-R) to RN and international ships and the ability to sustain 1 fully capable (guaranteed) maritime Task Line at FOST(S) at the required readiness with a fully capable contingent Task Line available at designated readiness to conduct additional FOST(S) or wider NC tasking within agreed areas of UK FIR.

Information Request

If you would like to participate in this RFI, the Authority anticipates that responses will be no more than 16 pages and based on the information above, responses will include answers to the following questions:

1. Company name, address, contact details/website and no. of years in the market
2. Can you meet the proposed IOC/FOC dates? If these dates are not achievable, what would be more realistic?
3. What aircraft type(s) (and how many of each type) do you possess and could use to deliver the proposed service?
4. What certifications do the aircraft conform to?
5. Please provide a description of the existing Ship Air Interface (SAI) or HOSTAC trials / clearances that your proposed aircraft type(s) possess. Please also include any existing trials information or other ship clearances that may be helpful in rapidly progressing SA-R clearances.
6. What dependencies have you identified (eg infrastructure or Government Funded Facilities/Equipment) that would need to be provided by the Authority?
7. Do you have any previous experience in providing similar services? If so, could you please provide details.
8. Which organisational approvals (civil and military) do you hold or plan to achieve that would support any bid?
9. Are there any other specific benefits (strictly in terms of technical delivery of the proposed service) that you would like us to know about regarding your organisation and capabilities.

The Authority is seeking responses from companies that can provide information on their capacity and capability in respect of the above information required. If you are unable to answer a question, please respond with 'N/A' to signify that it has been reviewed. Information may be shared in relation to how the requirement was prepared and developed internally within the MOD. However, information resulting from any RFI marked 'Commercially Sensitive' by the respondent, will not be shared outside of the Authority. Note that due to the Authority's need to ensure equality of treatment for all potential bidders in any subsequent procurement, we may then decide not to use a supplier's response if that response is commercially sensitive and potentially distorts competition.

By receiving this information, the MOD is not obligated to enter into contract and future procurement actions will be at MOD discretion. The Authority will not be liable to reimburse any costs incurred by any parties who respond to this notice. The Authority does not intend to provide any formal debriefs following receipt of responses. Furthermore, a response or non-response to this notice will not preclude involvement in future procurement activities for this requirement.

Please submit responses to the RFI by 1200hrs on 02/06/2022 to the Authority's Commercial Officer via e-mail submission to andy.davies171@mod.gov.uk. Any matter relating to this RFI on which

companies requires clarification, should be raised in the form of a Clarification Question (CQ), submitted to the Commercial Officer identified above by no later than 26/05/2022.