



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
SUMMARY NOTE FOR THE PROVISION OF
AVIATION SUPPORT SURFACE FINISH CAPABILITY

1. Purpose of this RFI

The following Request for Information (RFI) seeks feedback and information from the market on the most appropriate Procurement Strategy to support an enduring aviation Surface Finish Capability in the UK and overseas. The Capability includes aircraft and airfield operations support equipment. This RFI is for information purposes only and carries with it no intent to create any legal obligation(s). All information provided or any discussions held shall be conducted on that basis and are 'subject to contract'. It is the Authority's intent to compete any anticipated contract.

This document sets out key information, including; a summary of requirements, anticipated procurement process, contract form and, in particular, provides dates for a proposed Early Market Engagement Session (EMES) at RAF Coningsby.

2. Brief Background

The UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) has an obligation to deliver safe and airworthy Air Systems for training and operations, both in the UK and overseas. This Capability must ensure that serviceable aircraft and Airfield Support Equipment (ASE) are available to support operational, training and display output for the UK MOD. It has an additional requirement to deliver Station support tasks. An efficient, effective, and reliable Surface Finish (SF) capability supports reduced maintenance turn-round times, reduced equipment / component failure and improves mission survivability through the application of adequate corrosion protection, camouflage, and conspicuous markings.

This Capability is currently provided through two (2) discrete contracts: i. a Surface Finish output contract which is managed using Government Furnished Assets (GFA) and has International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) / Technical Assistance Agreement (TAA) requirements; and ii. a separate contract providing paints, specialist coatings and associated materials which requires Facility Security Clearance (FSC) formally known as List-X¹ and Industry Personnel Security Assurance (IPSA) which is formally known as List-V² requirement for specific in-scope aircraft.

¹ [Industry Security Assurance Centre](#) – Homepage GOV.UK

² [IPSA](#) policy - part of the Security Policy Framework/Government Standard 007 – Security (GovS007)

3. Summary of Current Requirements

The current requirements are summarised as follows:

- i. Continued provision of Surface Finish Capability to a modern Air Force for the 21st Century;
- ii. Current provision at MOD Surface Finish Facilities on the Defence Estate in the UK and Overseas;
- iii. Defence Estate access requires a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check for all permanent employees;
- iv. Capability outputs focus on the following main delivery support areas:

- Aviation (whole aircraft, or on/off aircraft component work).
- Vehicles or Motor Transportation in support of aviation operations.

For example Land Rovers, Airfield Fuel Bowsers and other Ground Support Equipment (GSE) in support of aviation operations, for example, Axle Stands, Weapons Trolleys, Aircraft Steps. In this document GSE is part of Airfield Support Equipment (ASE).

- Miscellaneous station tasks including graphics creation/application.

For example, Foamex, metal, magnetic, other MOD unit signage, unit state boards, station executive honour boards, health & safety signage, aircraft and other promotional and heraldic updates, workshop support tasks. Also, Gate Guardian surface finish preparation and application.

Table 1 provides the current Surface Finish output capabilities delivered across the existing estate.

Table 2 identifies the current in-scope aircraft serviced by the Surface Finish contract and the type of Surface Finish work carried out on each. This is subject to change before contract award and through-life as aircraft are retired and replacement aircraft are brought into scope.

4. Anticipated Contract

Any anticipated contract, to be let competitively, is envisaged to be up to eight (8) years in duration with an estimated total value of £73M ex VAT.

This RFI is an opportunity to seek feedback and information from the market to inform the most appropriate Procurement Strategy for a Surface Finish Capability, including new contract delivery proposals; exploitation of new technology or approaches; and/or broader Category Management approach. Market feedback is therefore welcome to determine whether an eight (8) year contract period would be a suitable vehicle to fully realise innovative proposals.

New contract delivery proposals could include but not be limited to: a review and update of the existing Defence Estate Surface Finish Facilities; new proposed usage of facilities outside the Defence Estate; full-service provision of a Surface Finish Capability; and /or the introduction of new tools and techniques and/or new practices or Robotics or other Automation.

The requirement will be competed under the Defence and Security Public Contracts Regulations (DSPCR) 2011. It will progress through several internal MOD approval gate stages prior to any resultant contract award. The process will provide the opportunity for clarification discussions with potential suppliers. Any proposed contract will follow standard MOD and Government procurement terms, with additional conditions appropriate to the newly framed contract requirements. This is expected to include specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Social Value measures, and a Limitation of Contractor's Liability.

It is the Authority's intention to proceed with the best contractual vehicle and pricing method to achieve the required Defence performance.

5. Indicative Procurement Process and Timeline

Please see below initial example options as have been outlined in an internal Strategic Outline Business Case. These options might provide an opportunity for capturing the best Value for Money (VfM) and over time, increasingly de-risk the ability to meet forecasted and operationally contingent requirements. These options are non exhaustive and further novel ideas are welcome.

Commercial Competition - A rationalised Surface Finish estate and a robust consumables contracting method.

This option would explore replacing the existing Surface Finish service and consumables contracts, either with a single contracted service provider or across two separate contracts, as per the current arrangement.

Early market engagement will help shape, for example:

- Where and how the capability is most efficiently and effectively provisioned and could develop scope for broader Third-Party Income Gainshare opportunities.
- Rationalisation or Regionalisation of Surface Finish Facilities provision with Government Furnished Assets would aim to make more efficient/targeted use of facility locations, equipment, and specialist technicians.
- Proposals to update / replace existing, authority provisioned Surface Finish Facility infrastructure and equipment including the introduction of new Tools, Techniques and Procedures are encouraged.

Commercial Competition - Contracted provision of the full SF capability (output service, consumables provision, and facility management).

This opportunity seeks to develop a framework that places greater obligation on Industry, passing responsibility and elements of risk from the Authority, for example:

Provision of assets, tooling and consumables and /or management.

Though it is anticipated that some Defence Estate Surface Finish Facilities will need to be retained for operational contingent purposes, responsibility for management of these could move to the successful Contractor or another Government agency, for example, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

Proposals would require robust Performance Indicators and potentially the implementation of an incentivised payment approach.

The overarching requirement is for a future UK Surface Finish Capability solution (on or off the Defence Estate) that should be within a 4-hour radius of Northern and Central region centres of gravity.

Figure 1 presents the twelve UK and one overseas Surface Finish facility locations³ and overlays two 4-hour road move estimates from these UK nadirs.

Surface Finish Facilities being located outside the UK Defence Estate will be considered. Should Industry propose the use of alternative / their own facilities supportive evidence that our Capability, and particularly, its security can be maintained would be required. Any solution external to the Defence Estate should have the capability to receive aircraft or ASE for its preparation and application of appropriate Surface Finish followed by its return to the customer⁴.

The anticipated procurement timeline is subject to the selected procurement route and strategy. However, the Authority is looking to go to tender with the market as early as possible.

³ Cyprus is an additional future SFA delivery location option

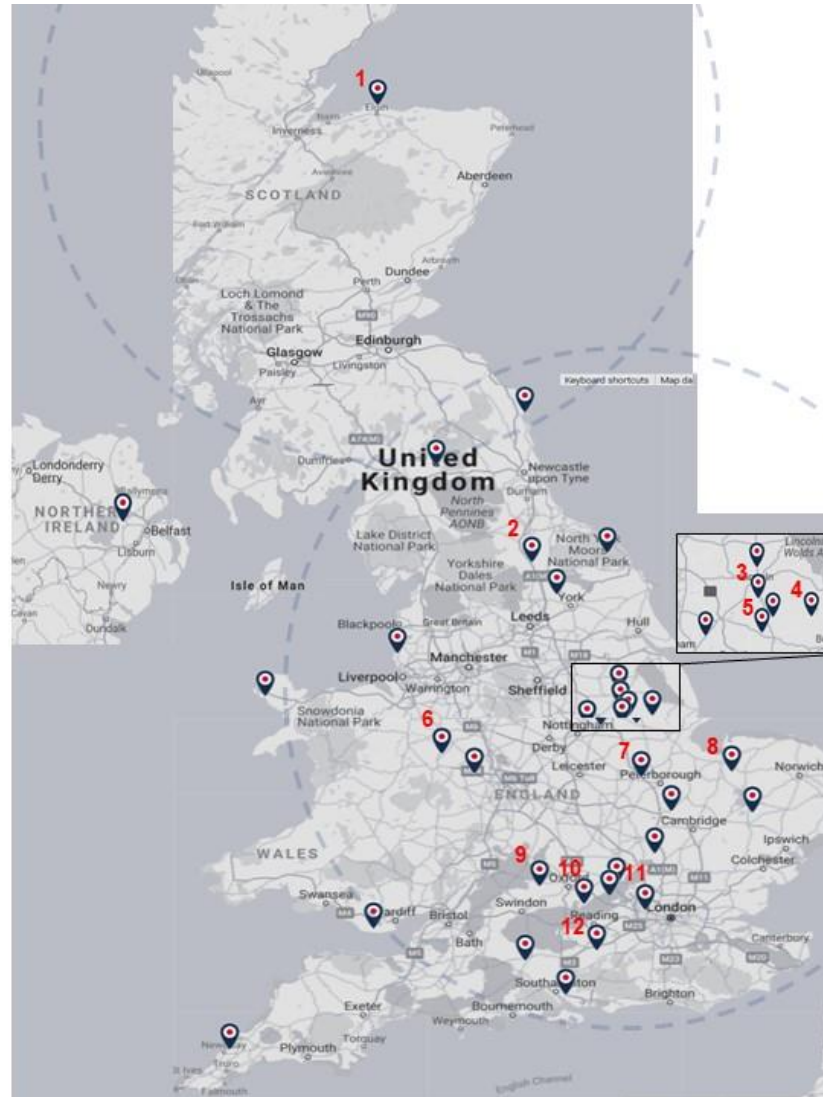
⁴ Note: GSE, Vehicle & Miscellaneous Station Task items, Aircraft Component and Whole Aircraft movement will be considered the responsibility of the Authority. However, a future contracted solution entirely removed from the defence estate may provide alternative efficient / value for money solutions.

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Table 1 Surface Finish Locations & Capability Output

RAF Stations with Surface Finish (SF) Facilities	SF Output Performed Ground Support Equipment (GSE)	SF Output Performed MT (Green/Yellow Fleet Vehicles)	SF Output Performed Ad-hoc (RAF Station) Tasks	SF Output Performed Whole Aircraft (A) or Aircraft Component (C)	SF Facility Max Capacity In-service RAF Aircraft	Consumables Provision
RAF Benson	✓	✓	✓	A	Puma HC Mk2 (minus blades) L (18.20m) - Fuselage W (3.50m) - H (5.14m)	✓
RAF Brize Norton	✓	✓	✓	C	Aircraft Components Only	✓
RAF Coningsby	✓	✓	✓	A/C	Typhoon FGR4 L (15.96m) - W (11.09m) - H (5.29m)	✓
RAF Cranwell	✓	✓	✓	A/C	Phenom T1 L (12.82m) - W (12.30m) - H (4.35m)	✓
RAF Leeming	✓	✓	✓	A/C	Hawk T2 L (12.43m) - W (9.08m) - H (3.98m)	✓
RAF Lossiemouth	✓	✓	✓	A/C	Typhoon FGR4 L (15.96m) - W (11.09m) - H (5.29m)	✓
RAF Marham	✓	✓	✓	A/C	Phenom T1 L (12.82m) - W (12.30m) - H (4.35m)	✓
RAF Northolt	✓	✓	✓	C	Aircraft Components Only	✓
RAF Odiham	✓	✓	✓	A/C	Chinook L (30.14m) (Fuselage Length 15.46m) - Fuselage Width (3.78m) - Rotor Diameter 18.29(m) - H (5.77m)	✓
RAF Shawbury	✓	✓	✓	C	Aircraft Components Only	✓
RAF Waddington	✓	✓	✓	C	Aircraft Components Only	✓
RAF Wittering	✓	✓	✓	A/C	Phenom T1 L (12.82m) - W (12.30m) - H (4.35m)	✓
Mount Pleasant Complex (MPC) Falkland Islands	✓	✓	✓	C	Aircraft Components Only	✓
Possible Future Project Option - RAF Akrotiri Cyprus	✓	✓	✓	C	Aircraft Components Only	✓

Figure 1 Surface Finish Capability Locations Map



UK Surface Finish Facilities

1. RAF Lossiemouth
2. RAF Leeming
3. RAF Waddington
4. RAF Coningsby
5. RAF Cranwell
6. RAF Shawbury
7. RAF Wittering
8. RAF Marham
9. RAF Brize Norton
10. RAF Benson
11. RAF Northolt
12. RAF Odiham

Overseas Surface Finish Facilities

1. RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus (future option)
2. MPA, Falkland Islands



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Table 2 Surface Finish in-scope aircraft

Platform	Surface Finish Requirement (A) Whole Aircraft (C) Component work only – on or off aircraft Special to Type (STT) ASE
Hawk T1	A
Typhoon	A
Puma	A
Airseeker (Rivet Joint)	C
A400M	C
BBMF Fleet: Lancaster - Dakota - Spitfire - Hurricane - Chipmunk	C
Chinook	C
C17	C
Juno	C
Jupiter	C
LII (F35) ac + ASE	C & Special to Type (STT) ASE
Wedgetail (E7)	STT ASE
Protector	C
Shadow	C
Phenom	C Potential inclusion of aircraft component work prior to contract award
Dassault Envoy IV	C Potential inclusion of aircraft component work prior to contract award

6. Early Market Engagement Session (EMES)

The Authority intends to host an Early Market Engagement Session (EMES) at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire on one of the following dates:

- Tuesday 7 March 2023 or
- Wednesday 8 March 2023 or
- Thursday 9 March 2023

IMPORTANT : REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

No later than 13 FEBRUARY 2023 17:00 17 FEBRUARY 2023*

***The deadline for expressions of interest to attend the EMES has been extended from 13/02/2023 to 17:00 on 17/02/2023. Please note, if you choose NOT to attend the EMES you are still entitled to submit a response to the RFI questions no later than 31/03/2023.**

If your company is interested in attending you MUST provide the bulleted details below using subject line: SFA RFI EMES Response in your email correspondence to the Authority Point of Contact (POC).

- Organisation Name
- Organisation details (Legal name, website address):
- Name(s) of Attendee(s):
- Position / Role of Attendee(s):
- Email Addresses for Attendee(s):
- Phone Number of Attendee(s):

This EMES will provide an opportunity to explore the RFI written response questions posed below.

This in-person event intends to engage the market on the requirements of this capability and determine the most appropriate Procurement Strategy that industry is able to support.

Please note, no more than three attendees, per supplier are able to be supported by the Authority. Depending on the number of suppliers interested, the Authority will inform interested parties if this number needs to be reduced.

Primary Objectives of the EMES include:

- Gauge and generate further interest around the Surface Finish RFI.
- Assess the market readiness and maturity in addressing the presented requirements.
- Obtain feedback and queries on the Surface Finish Project requirements as currently defined.
- Gain a better understanding of the ROM costs of option proposal.

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- Review (benefits and risks) of the potential procurement route and strategy options; and
- Identify any additional innovative solutions available, which can improve the required capability, facility performance or reduce the overall costs, risks.

Indicative Format : EMES

- An overview presentation about the project and its requirements followed by general Q&A.
- A representative Surface Finish Facility site visit at RAF Coningsby.
- Possible one-to-one sessions with the interested parties to discuss their responses to the questions in Section 7 and any further queries on the day.
- The overview presentation and Q&A will be recorded and shared with all interested parties for fairness and transparency.

Early Market Engagement Session : Indicative Agenda

Time	Location	Notes
0800-0845	Arrive and book-in at RAF Coningsby Main Gate	(Postcode LN4 4SY) – Check in at the guardroom and wait to be escorted to venue
0900	Arrive Venue	Training Development Flight – Wratten Suite (Tea / Coffee / Refreshments)
0915	Welcome Address - Safety & Domestics	Everyone
0920	Presentation Start - Opening Address by SRO	Everyone
0930	Scene Setting – Current SF Provision	Everyone
0945	Scene Setting - Project Future Intent	Everyone
1000	Surface Finish Facility Visit	5 min walk to Surface Finish Facility. Attendees will be split into 2 groups and hosted by SERCO representatives
1130	Return to Wratten Suite	
1145	Lunch	
1230	Resume Event	Refreshment arrangements tbc
1235	Opportunity for Industry Groups to speak to the team on RFI Questions 1 & 2 with any follow-up and supplementary questions – (Wratten Suite & adjoining classrooms)	If time allows and if required : Individual Break-Out Sessions One-to-one sessions with suppliers
1525	Closing Address / AOB	Everyone - Wratten Suite
1530	Wash Up	
1600	Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Museum Visit opportunity	Open to all and subject to availability

7. The Request For information (RFI)

Following the Early Market Engagement Session (EMES), the Authority invites industry to outline its ability and interest in meeting the requirement and proposed Procurement Strategy.

Please answer the below two (2) questions and provide any additional supporting information to the Authority via email to the point of contact noted in Section 8.

For both of the Questions, using the information provided and any new information you feel appropriate, please provide capital spend and representative through-life Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) costs to help inform Authority Outline Business Case submissions. Interested parties may consider presenting these costs as Material / Facility / Time / Personnel efficiencies.

Question 1 - Optimal Use of Technology - Maximum response for this section is ten (10) A4 pages.

The Authority would like to understand what new or emerging technologies could be employed to deliver the requirement.

Please provide details of the method or methods that you believe could provide the most efficient solution, with specific reference to:

- The pros and cons of the technologies used.
- How the efficiencies are to be demonstrated when compared to current Surface Finish preparation, for example, chemical stripping, Media Stripping. Or current application methods, for example, hand-held spray guns, rolling and brushing techniques, etc. Efficiencies should be demonstrated in terms of time / cost / workforce / materials.
- When considering wet (paints, varnish, etc) and dry (sanding paper, masking tapes, etc) Surface Finish output support materials, please reflect whether the solution would be optimally served using the current MOD contract solution.
- If an alternative solution is proposed (e.g. Contractor provision) then please provide an explanation of how this can be achieved with clear availability, security, pricing, etc solutions.

Question 2 - Optimisation of Locations - Maximum response for this section is twenty (20) A4 pages.

The Authority would like to understand how the solution could be optimised in terms of locations / infrastructure.

To bound the question please provide a response to each of the following highlighting any reliance on the technologies outlined in Question 1:

- Efficiencies that could be delivered under the current structure as outlined in this RFI's supporting information [Fig 1, Tables 1&2] and/or how spare capacity could be used for example, third party incentivised gainshare. Can any efficiencies be identified? If not, what further information could be required to identify them?
- If totally unconstrained, for example, provision of the Surface Finish Capability could take place at a location or locations of your choosing on or off the Defence Estate, what might that solution look like?
- How would the solution to this unconstrained provision off the Capability alter if there was a requirement to keep some facilities on the Defence Estate in some fashion for operational resilience purposes? Defence Estate UK Units for consideration would be RAF Brize Norton, RAF Coningsby, RAF Lossiemouth, RAF Waddington, and RAF Odiham. Overseas locations would not be affected.

Summary of timeline milestones:

Milestone	Date
RFI release Date	6 th February 2023
Confirmation of Interest in attending EMES - deadline	13 February 2023
Supplier answers in response to RFI - deadline	31 March 2023

Please send your responses to the RFI questions to the Authority Point of Contact below no later than 31/03/2023. Responses are outlined for each question; additional information will be discussed during the EMES. Please note, it is mandatory to provide your written responses to the questions and clearly mark any confidential or proprietary information.

8. Further information and queries

All information and formal communications in relation to this project will be provided only through the Defence Sourcing Portal (DSP) and/or a Commercial Officer in the Air Commodities Delivery Team.

Therefore please direct any communication in relation to this RFI and the Early Market Engagement Day to the Point of Contact below.

Authority Point of Contact:

DESAS-AC-702913450-SFA@mod.gov.uk

Please Note: The content provided within this RFI is provided for information purposes only and is not a formal approach to the market / call for competition. Any formal approach to the market will be completed through the Defence Sourcing Portal (DSP) via a Contract Notice. The information within this RFI is subject to change and is based upon the Authority's anticipated requirements and procurement timeline.

Confidentiality & Proprietary Information:

Please note, information shared during the Early Market Engagement Session (EMES), which may be relevant to the procurement process, will be shared by the Authority with all participants following the EMES. Whilst engaging in the EMES, it is the participants responsibility to specifically identify information shared with the Authority which is considered as their Intellectual Property (IP) or Commercially Sensitive information. As a result, such identified information will not be shared with other participants by the Authority however, it is expected that at this stage the amount of such information will be limited.

Confidential information included in your response, or in discussions connected to it, needs to be clearly marked and will not be disclosed outside of MOD personnel. Proprietary information, where included, should be kept to minimum and must be clearly marked. Please note, information shared during the EMES which may be relevant to the procurement process, will be shared by the Authority with all participants following the EMES (information which is IP, confidential or proprietary information will not be shared).

Costs of preparing your RFI response:

Any costs relating to the travel and attendance at the EMES and/or preparation and submission of a response to this RFI are the sole responsibility of the respondent.