# Statement of Requirement

## Introduction

The UK’s independent nuclear deterrent has existed for over 60 years to deter the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life, and that of our NATO Allies. The UK faces a growing and diversifying set of threats over the coming decades, including from major nuclear armed states, emerging nuclear states and state-sponsored nuclear terrorism. The complexity and breadth of these challenges requires the UK to consider how to adapt its approach to deterrence across the spectrum of conflict, including nuclear and strategic deterrence. This, in turn, requires an intellectual capability that can assist UK policymakers in understanding the new security dynamic and its implications for future deterrence requirements.

The MoD is committed to not only developing this expertise within Government, but through a thriving and robust civil society which can provide valuable research and challenge to Government on these issues. The Nuclear Deterrence Fund is a £3.3m pilot programme which will run between FY24-27 to stimulate wider UK expertise in nuclear deterrence issues and to generate a research base to support nuclear deterrence policymaking. The Fund seeks to support the following objectives:

1. Promote innovative, high quality and impactful research in nuclear deterrence aligned with HMG priorities.
2. Improve and sustain the generation and use of evidence to address UK nuclear deterrence policy challenges and effectively embed research within deterrence policymaking.
3. Support institutions to attract, develop, and retain early- and mid-career researchers within the UK.
4. Support the formation of a more equal, diverse and inclusive nuclear deterrence research workforce.
5. Establish enduring and sustainable structures of engagement and knowledge exchange between nuclear deterrence researchers and policymakers.

Our overarching areas of interest are outlined at Annex A, but we will consider additional topics outside this scope.

## Call for Proposals

We welcome applications from experienced researchers with a proven track record of rigorous, policy-relevant analysis and promising early- and mid-career researchers seeking to deepen their expertise and experience. We currently offer two pathways for submissions: the Knowledge Accelerator and the Advanced pathways, details of each are given below.

1. The Knowledge Accelerator Pathway: The Knowledge Accelerator Pathway is designed for either short-term projects (of less than one year) and/or early- and mid-career researchers (defined as doctoral, post-doctoral, and/or 5-10 years' experience) seeking to deepen their expertise or gain experience as a principal investigator. We accept bids from consortiums or single institutions/organisations. No funding limit is specified per proposal, although we typically expect to fund proposals between approximately £1k and £50k.
2. Advanced Pathway: The Advanced Pathway is designed for single- or multi-year research proposals that run until the end of FY26-27. We accept bids from consortiums or single institutions/organisations. No funding limit is specified per proposal, however we would typically expect to fund bids between approximately £50k and £125k per institution per financial year. Funding limits for consortiums will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Operational arrangements

### Bidding Timelines

The Fund will open for proposals between October 2024 and January 2027. In order to submit proposals to the Nuclear Deterrence Fund, suppliers must register for an account on the Defence Sourcing Portal (DSP). Once the necessary due diligence checks have been completed, suppliers will be onboarded onto a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) which will provide the overarching contractual terms. Suppliers will have the opportunity to onboard onto the DPS at any time between September 2024 and January 2027. Once on the DPS, suppliers can submit research project proposals for consideration. The detail of any funding agreements for successful bids will be covered by a supplementary project tasking form. We strongly encourage interested suppliers to [register on the Defence Sourcing Portal (DSP)](https://contracts.mod.uk/esop/ogc-host/public/mod/web/user-guide.html) as soon as possible to mitigate any delays to your application.

The dates of Programme Board meetings and corresponding deadlines for FY24/25 are as follows:

#### Nuclear Deterrence Fund Deadlines FY24/25

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Programme Board Meeting | Supplier Registration on DSP Deadline | Project Proposal Submission & Contract Terms Acceptance Deadline |
| Wednesday 23rd October 2024 | Friday 4th October 2024 | Monday 21st October 2024 09:00 (BST) |
| Thursday 21st November 2024 | Thursday 31st October 2024 | Monday 18th November 2024 09:00 (GMT) |
| Thursday 12th December 2024 | Thursday 21st November 2024 | Friday 6th December 2024 12:30 (GMT) |
| Wednesday 22nd January 2025 | Friday 3rd January 2025 | Monday 20th January 2025 09:00 (GMT) |
| Thursday 27th March 2025 | Thursday 6th March 2025 | Thursday 20th March 2025 09:00 (GMT) |

The Nuclear Deterrence Fund reserves the right to change these dates.

From March 2025, the Programme Board will sit quarterly to review submissions.

Suppliers only need to register once throughout the course of this pilot programme, irrespective of the number of applications made.

Funding decisions will be communicated within four weeks of each Board meeting.

### Requirements

All proposals will require:

1. Successful onboarding onto the contractual framework via the DSP. This includes successful completion of a due diligence assessment.
2. Submission of a fully completed project form which can be found at Annex C to be submitted via the DSP.
3. Submission of a full activity-based budget which can be found at Annex D to be submitted via the DSP.

### Assessment Criteria

Project proposals will be considered in line with the criteria listed in Annex B. We reserve the right to amend these criteria.

### Additional information

Please refer to the following annexes for further information:

* Annex A: Research Objectives and Areas of Interest
* Annex B: Guidance Assessment Criteria
* Annex C: Project Proposal Form
* Annex D: Project Budget Form

Any commercial/contractual questions should be submitted through the DSP or directly to Jonathan.Pople101@mod.gov.uk. Should you have enquiries regarding the DNO's policy and research priorities, please contact DNO-NuclearDeterrenceFund@mod.gov.uk.