**Request for Information**

The Air Commodities Delivery Team within the Ministry of Defence, hereafter referred to as the Authority, is exploring the market for a requirement for the procurement and support of a Material Handling Solution (MHS) for a new Freight Handling Facility (FHF) at RAF Brize Norton.

**General Description**

1. Air Movements activity is an essential operational enabler within the military logistics chain. The RAF Air Transport Force (ATF) moves a significant volume of cargo. RAF Brize Norton is Defence’s single military Airport of Embarkation (APOE) and Defence has directed that the Station should be modernised, informed by industry benchmarking, to ensure that it is resourced and configured to support Defence Planning Assumptions.

2. To ensure effective and efficient use of the ATF, a process-driven air cargo handling system is required to support all of the processes necessary to receive freight, process and build cargo onto aircraft pallets (ACP), check-weigh and store within the facility prior to loading on flights for exports and the reverse procedure for imports. It also needs to provide an equipment / software solution to move, record and track freight and pallet locations. The FHF capability will also provide a reporting facility to generate management reports on all aspects of cargo information.

3. The requirement is to provide a Commercial off The Shelf (CoTS) fully automated air cargo handling system for RAF Brize Norton. The MHS will ensure the optimisation of cargo handling processes and include, but not be limited to:

* Dock Levellers; hydraulically activated ramp mechanisms to allow efficient passage of general freight handling equipment between warehouse loading dock and truck deck.
* 20T gantry crane for the movement/loading and off-loading of outsized freight.
* The provision of multiple main deck work stations capable of handling single, double and quadruple pallet configurations[[1]](#footnote-1) (linked pallets), with the capability to weigh each individual pallet~~s~~.
* Ball deck/castor deck facilities to manually transfer and manipulate ACPs between an array of interfacing equipment.
* Automated storage and retrieval system to utilise autonomous/software controlled Elevating Transfer Vehicle (ETV) to transport built pallets to/from workstation/receiving deck to Pallet and Container Handling System (PCHS). PCHS to provide c.300 storage positions.
* Control systems capable of recording support data e.g. weights, freight and pallet locations and is compatible/able to integrate with existing Defence asset tracking software.

This requirement does not include any of the infrastructure which will be put in place by a separate arrangement to the acquisition of equipment.

The facility is expected to have the following dimensions:

* Building footprint - 9950m2
* Internal height - max c.18m

4. The User Requirement areas for equipment, hardware, software and support for the areas detailed in Annex A. There is a projected through life support requirement of 25 years. At Annex B is a concept of design proposal that we invite you to review and comment upon.

5. As part of exploring the market, the Authority invites industry to outline its ability and interest in meeting the requirement. Please answer the below questions and provide any additional supporting information to the Authority via email DESASAC-ComrclContact@mod.gov.uk. Responses should be limited to 500 words per answer or additional information.

1. Would you be interested in bidding for this requirement? Please provide a brief overview of your equipment and its ability to meet the requirement as provided in this RFI. Would you be able to provide a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost for the provision of the equipment and installation, and support costs for a 25 year period.
2. What level of information would you require to provide a fully costed bid? Would your organisation expect the Authority to work with a third party to generate a design which you then implement or would you expect the Authority to provide a detailed requirement document which you use to generate and then implement the best design for your equipment? If both approaches are acceptable, which would you consider optimal and why?
3. What support is recommended for your equipment and what warranty is provided with your equipment?
4. With regards to the concept of design proposal at Annex B, please provide any comment here. We are particularly interested if there are any elements of the design proposal that would be a constraining factor to the use of your equipment as a solution to our requirement.
5. Please provide timescales for the provision of your equipment, and for the installation. These will be used for planning assumptions only.
6. Please provide information about the location of your supply chain (UK, Europe, or Worldwide) and any supply chain risks as a result of Brexit or Covid?

This request will assess confidence in the market’s capabilities and appetite to support this requirement to inform the Procurement Strategy and is not a commitment to pursue the strategy currently outlined by the Authority. A formal contract award procedure will follow this but may not reflect the full requirement.

Please refrain from supplying marketing or generic company information not relevant to the information sought in this RFI.

1. Pallet details – dimensions and cargo weights

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type | Dimensions | Weight (normal) | Weight (surge) |
| Military Aircraft Pallet (ACP) 463L | 108"W X 88"L X 96”H (2.74m x 2.24m x 2.44m) | Outbound - c. 1350 kgInbound – c. 1000 kg | Outbound – c. 2500 kgInbound – c. 2500 kg |

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)