

**RFI0061**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**ATLANTIC THUNDER 26 – Maritime Unmanned Systems Registration of Interest**

**RFI Title:** RFI0061 ATLANTIC THUNDER 26 – Maritime Unmanned Systems Registration of Interest

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# Introduction

This RFI is not a bidding opportunity but a means by which industry can provide information. Any resulting procurement activity will be conducted competitively.

**Please note:**

**This RFI is an information gathering exercise, no further discussions with industry are planned at this stage however any future procurement activity will be advertised in line with public procurement regulations on the Defence Sourcing Portal and Contracts Finder.**

1. Background

This call outlines Industry opportunities to participate in ATLANTIC THUNDER26, to be conducted at the QinetiQ Hebrides range on the North-West coast of Scotland from 11th – 22nd May 2026

The Royal Navy Develop Directorate will consider Industry proposals for Royal Navy sponsorship to attend live participation in AT 26.

Proposals will be considered at an RN Board which is expected to run w/c 15th Septemberto inform planning considerations for AT 26.  Successful applicants will be notified following the Board sitting and dates agreed for more detailed discussions.

Proposals are required in outline by 1200, 12th September 25 and should indicate what capability Industry is offering as a component into the OpE element of this exercise.

AT26 is a US – UK multi-domain exercise designed to validate SUW kill chains, build resilient kill webs and deliver strategic messaging through kinetic demonstration that will take place off the coast of the Hebrides in Scotland from 11th – 22nd May 2026.

During this SINKEX, UK and US maritime and air forces will conduct live fire engagements against the target ship. The exercise demonstrates the employment of leading-edge technologies in order to reinforce both Joint and Allied interoperability and is a priority of both the Royal Navy and the United States Navy.

On completion of the SINKEX the hulk will be resting on the seabed at 6000ft (1900m). Navy Develop is proposing an OpE Underwater Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) element to this exercise, with a view to progressing capability and development of Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles (UUVs). There will also be a strong focus on interoperability to interchangeability (I2I) and it is in these areas that we are inviting industry to make a proposal for involvement.

The AT26 conference schedule is below, at which sponsored Industry will be expected to attend and contribute.  Industry must be prepared to commit to the OpE timeline for the duration.

In addition to the intended outcomes below, please note that there is particular interest in demonstrations of:

* Target acquisition and remote underwater survey of infrastructure and objects of depths down to 6000ft /1900 m, including 2D/3D scanning in high resolution.
* Data gathering capabilities and information exchange between MUS.
* Solutions to support ‘system to system’ integration including across security domains.
* AI & ML tools and edge processing solutions to provide mission advantage.
* Solutions to support Advanced autonomous/uncrewed solutions - capable of operating in a ‘system of systems’ architecture.
* Novel communications solutions in bandwidth constrained environments (Acoustic and RF).
* Long endurance systems. Solutions to enhance sensor and power performance. Novel power and energy solutions.
* Low signature autonomous/uncrewed platforms.
* Uncrewed system Launch and Recovery solutions.

A pre-requisite of UK sponsorship is that all MUS assets are fully operational by the commencement of the exercise and are integrated into the exercise Command and Control architecture, details of which will be made available upon selection.

Whilst AT26 presents opportunities to showcase technology, and for Industry contributions to be highlighted during the exercise to an appropriate audience, it must be understood that this is a development exercise. The focus will be on accelerating capability delivery by addressing the capability blockers listed below.

UK Industry participation requires national sponsorship into the exercise. This sponsorship is expected by the ‘home’ nation.  Participants will be required to attend specific and pertinent planning and operational briefings and will need to contribute to a drumbeat of remote planning events in addition to the in-person conferences detailed below. Contribution to these meetings is a condition of national sponsorship and ensures successful exercise planning.

A notional contract will be required to cover non-disclosure and provision of the GFX required for integration. In some cases, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering data sharing, Intellectual Property Rights and liabilities will be required.

Proposals are required in outline by 1200, 12th September 2025 and should indicate what capability Industry is offering as a component into this maritime OpE effort.

Applications will be considered against their ability to meet the requirements set out above and, additionally, their ability to integrate and contribute to the exercise serials currently under development.

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|  **Outline Schedule**   |
| 1200 12th Sep 25 | Register interest window closes   |
| 15th – 19th Sep 25 | Board consideration   |
| 22nd – 24th Sep 25 | Industry informed.   |
| TBD | UK Planning Meeting |
| 4th - 6th Nov 25 | Main Planning Conference, Naples, Italy |
| 10th – 12th Mar 26 | Final Planning Conference, Northwood, UK |
| 11th – 22nd May 26 | ATLANTIC THUNDER 26 – Hebrides, Scotland |

A collegiate approach and high professional standards are required across the UK contingent.  At the sole discretion of the Authority, endorsement to attend may be withdrawn at any stage.  Entities retain responsibility to ensure their activities are safe at all times.

For the avoidance of doubt: **Endorsement does not come with any financial or resource commitment from the Royal Navy or NATO.**

The ability of the Authority to support an activity will be an entry criterion.  Industry bids should be as logistically self-reliant in theatre as practical.

1. RFI intended outcomes

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

1.    Develop further the Authority’s understanding of the different technologies and capabilities available in the market, both current and emerging.

2.    Align Authority requirements with industry standards and processes.

3. Enable the Authority to develop a procurement strategy that will deliver best value for money for Defence.

4. Accelerate national and bilateral Maritime Uncrewed Systems (MUS) development programmes and projects, involving the “triple helix” (end users, Academia, and Industry).

5. Drive interoperability and interchangeability in MUS.

6. Enhance new developments and features in the context of MUS by testing and evaluating them in an operational scenario with varied levels of complexity to assess and progress their capabilities.

7. Promote the operational exploitation of MUS capabilities to fulfil the maritime capability gaps.

1. RFI Procedure

Responses to this RFI will be reviewed by subject matter experts from different functional areas within Navy Command Headquarters.

If upon review of your submission any clarifications or additional information is required, you will be contacted using the details provided in your RFI response.

Any details provided in response to this RFI will be used for information purposes only and will not be used to determine the potential Suppliers who will be invited to bid, should the Authority proceed to tender.

The results and analysis of this RFI shall not constitute any form of pre-qualification exercise.

Any formal procurement process will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Procurement Law.

Nothing in this RFI, or any other engagements with Industry prior to a formal procurement process, shall be construed as commitment by the Authority in relation to any future requirement(s) or any future procurement(s).

1. How to submit responses to this RFI

Respondents should provide responses in accordance with the format provided in **Annex A** quoting the RFI reference on all documentation and emails**.**

Please do not submit additional documents such as company overviews, the purpose of the RFI is to collect information related to the technical solution, any additional documents will not be included in the review process.

Any responses received after the deadline will be passed to the subject matter experts for information, however they may not be included in the RFI review meetings which are to be held immediately following the deadline.

Once completed, please return electronically to the e-mail address(es) shown below in **section 9,** no later than **12:00, 12th September 2025.**

Responses will be acknowledged electronically by return e-mail.

1. Confidentiality & Proprietary Information

No information included in your response, or in discussions connected to it, will be disclosed to any other third party.

Proprietary information, where included, should be kept to a minimum and must be clearly marked.

**For this RFI, any documentation submitted should be of the classification OFFICIAL.**

1. Costs of preparing your RFI response

Any costs relating to the preparation and submission of a response to this RFI are the sole responsibility of the respondent.

1. Contact

Quoting the RFI reference, please submit

1. any requests for clarification
2. all responses to this RFI and
3. any questions regarding Classification of document(s) intended for submission, to:

NAVYCOMRCL-RFI@mod.gov.uk

**The deadline for RFI questions is the 12/09/25. All questions and responses will be published alongside the RFI details on Contracts Finder and the Defence Sourcing Portal, within the original Early Engagement Notice no later than 3-5 working days after the query deadline.**

1. Annex A

**RFI0061 (ATLANTIC THUNDER 26 – Maritime Unmanned Systems Registration of Interest)**

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| --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Answer** |
| Company Name |   |
| Company Address |   |
| Is the company a Small - Medium Enterprise (less than 250 employees)? |  |
|    |
| Name of Company representative completing the RFI |   |
| Contact details (e-mail and telephone number) |   |
| Company web site address |   |
|    |
| Main products/services/line of business |   |
| Main market sector |   |
| Number of years in this market sector |   |
| **QUESTIONS**  |
| 1. Is your equipment capable of operating at the required depths down to a maximum of 6000ft/1900 m?
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| 1. Will your MUS assets be fully operational by the commencement of the exercise and able to be integrated into the exercise Command and Control architecture?
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| 1. If selected, are there any barriers that would prevent your participation at Atlantic Thunder 26?
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| 1. Would you sign MOD terms enabling the Royal Navy and exercise partners to access, use and replicate IPR and data generated during AT26?
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|  |
| 1. Would you sign up to a longer MOD IPR and Data Agreement enabling access to multiple exercises if chosen, for example 3-to-5-year agreements?
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| 1. Is there anything else you would like to add that it not addressed in the above questions?
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| **Innovative solutions are most welcome, even if they do not meet all the requirements above, we would welcome the opportunity to consider the positives and negatives.** |