

**RFI0047**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**PODS EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT, PROCUREMENT AND SUPPORT**

**RFI Title:** RFI0047 PODS EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT, PROCUREMENT AND SUPPORT

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Contents

[1. Introduction 3](#_Toc72400948)

[2. Background 3](#_Toc72400949)

[3. RFI intended outcomes 3](#_Toc72400950)

[4. RFI Procedure 3](#_Toc72400952)

[5. How to submit responses to this RFI 4](#_Toc72400953)

[6. Confidentiality & Proprietary Information 4](#_Toc72400954)

[7. Costs of preparing your RFI response 4](#_Toc72400955)

[8. Contact 5](#_Toc72400957)

[9.Annex A 6](#_Toc72400958)

# 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 RFI is intended to gain industry feedback regarding the feasibility of a new commercial framework to support the concept development (including testing and evaluation), manufacture, delivery, management, through life maintenance and support of joint deployable modular capabilities.

The intention is to build on the hard work undertaken as part of the Navy PODS (Persistent Operational Deployable Systems) project; bespoke capabilities which have been developed to be deployed within modular unit, matching the common dimensions of a shipping container, but not exclusively for use in the Maritime Domain. Current developed capabilities within the NavyPODS project include use cases covering Command and Control, Above Secret workspaces, Logistics, Experimentation, Medical and UXS (Unmanned Systems) operations and maintenance.

We are now looking to establish a commercial framework, accessible to all in Defence, to build an ecosystem of industry partners and defence users to accelerate the development, purchase and operational use of versatile modules (PODS) which can be tailored to user need and iterated on during the life of the requirement. The Authority can tender requirements without necessarily being part of a single Defence ‘PODS’ procurement programme which seeks to gather all Defence user requirements and fund all possible variants at the inception of the programme; inevitably slowing progress.

Initial thinking is that the framework would be established for 2 years as a trial, with possible 1 year extension and would be split into 2 tiers. There would be several lots in each tier to allow an eco-system of industry partners to compete for different capabilities:

* **Tier 1** Focusing on Experimental Development; concept, design and manufacture of protypes, (TRL 6-9), including integration with existing systems.
	+ Lot 1 – Development and maintenance of a baseline requirements set for all PODS i.e. what is the minimum requirement every POD must have in order to be deployed in any domain and ensure modularity. i.e. power/data interfaces, space/weight, boundaries, standards, anchorage points etc. It is important to note that this doesn’t necessitate a one size fits all approach but understanding how commonality of requirements across multiple use cases can be delivered. Requirements set and data will remain Defence Authority IPR and must be developed to be hosted and accessible to defence users on MoDNet.
	+ Lot 2 – Concept design and manufacture to deliver a POD capable of being tested in real world environments and in the UK against a specific set of user requirements. This includes iterative, (spiral development) updates to PODs following trials and testing. It is envisaged that IPR for specific POD variants will remain with the OEM on graduation from tier 1 to tier 2.
	+ Lot 3– Testing and evaluation of standards (including integration to existing capabilities) of all POD variants to allow acceptance by UK MOD.
* **Tier 2** Focusing on scaling the manufacture of those PODs which have completed experimental development, alongside in service management.
	+ Lot 4– Manufacture and iterative updates. Following completion of experimental development (Tier 1), manufacture of PODS for operational deployment, including fitting of GFX, with recourse to reach back to the OEM for iterative updates of existing PODS as required. It is envisaged that IPR of specific POD variants remains with the tier 1 OEM.
	+ Lot 5– Maintenance of POD ‘Fleet’. Capable of maintaining entire POD fleet (with an increasing number of variants and users over time) including relationships with OEMs. fulfilling repair requirements (air-conditioning, structural repair etc) for PODs in the UK and deployed overseas within 48 hours.
	+ Lot 6– Management. Capable of managing the logistic requirements (Storage and movement) of PODs when MoD is unable to meet this within existing capacity.

The competitive framework, will provide an environment whereby suppliers are able to demonstrate current capabilities, set out product development and commercial exploitation roadmaps. This proposed framework would allow both Defence and other suppliers to accelerate pace of development and reduce the time to in service capability.

1. RFI intended outcomes

This RFI aims to achieve the following two (2) outcomes:

1.    Develop further the Authority’s understanding of preferred framework structure to make this attractive to industry.

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

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 note questions 2-7 are optional depending on relevance to your organisation.**

Please do not submit additional documents such as: company overviews, the purpose of the RFI is to collect information related to the proposed commercial framework, 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, 11th November 2024.**

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 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

1. Annex A

**RFI0047 (PODS EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT, PROCUREMENT AND SUPPORT)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 (CUSTOMER TO INPUT QUESTIONS)**  |
| 1. Would the 2-tier framework and lots as proposed be attractive to you as an industry partner.
2. Which lots would you be interested in joining, and what is your rationale?
3. Are there any additional elements you believe should be included or amended?
4. Are there any additional risks, considerations or Lots taxonomies you think the Authority should take into account.
 |
|  |
| 1. (Optional as relevant) Is the way Lot 1 is described attractive to you as an industry partner? Do you foresee any complications, specifically over requirements gathering, IPR or hosting on a MODNET system. Are there any other areas you think the Authority should consider into achieve the same outcome?
 |
| 1. (Optional as relevant) Is the way Lot 2 is described attractive to you as an industry partner? Do you have any considerations on how to achieve the same outcome?
 |
| 1. (Optional as relevant) Is Lot 3 outlined in a way that would be attractive to you as an industry partner? Do you foresee any complications which the Authority should consider, especially when it comes to integration with existing capabilities.
 |
| 1. (Optional as relevant) Is Lot 4 outlined in a way that would be attractive to you as an industry partner? We assume that the same suppliers who conduct the experimental development for a specific variant will be the same supplier who conducts the manufacturing using their IP. Do primes and SME’s need to work together in order to achieve scaled manufacturing? Do you foresee any complications which the Authority should consider.
 |
| 1. (Optional as relevant) Is Lot 5 outlined in a way that would be attractive to you as an industry partner? Do you foresee any complications which the Authority should consider, particularly considering the potential of an undefined, yet increasing fleet of PODs.
 |
|  |
| 1. (NEED TO CONFIRM EXISTING DSCOM Team LEIDOS QUESTION)

(Optional as relevant) Is Lot 6 outlined in a way that would be attractive to you as an industry partner? Do you foresee any complications which the Authority should consider. |
|  |
| 1. Are there any further possible roles, cases or uses for PODs that have not been mentioned (Para 2 of Background) in this RFI?
 |
|  |
| 1. Do you have an estimate VROM indicative cost ranges for PODS, or indicative costs for Maintenance and management Lots (5&6) for the following scenarios:
	1. A fleet of 30 PODs with 10 deployed globally,
	2. A fleet of 50 PODs with 20 deployed globally
 |
| 1. Do you have any geographic limitations in your ability to meet the requirement, could you provide a brief outline of what these are. Would you be willing to work with other industry partners to overcome these?
 |
| 1. Would you be able to provide indicative timelines for the production of PODs in Tier 1. What additional factors would the Authority need to consider?
 |
| 1. The duration for this framework is anticipated to be 2 years +1 optional year. would you be interested in joining the framework on this basis, if not what duration would you require for the opportunity to be attractive to you?
 |
| 1. What volumes or throughput of PODS per year would make this attractive to you? (lots 4-6), please specify the lots you are referring to in your response.
 |
| 1. Are there any other key ideas, processes or considerations that you believe that the Authority should be made aware of that has not already been mentioned in this RFI?
 |
| **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.** |