

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Norfolk Virginia



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RELATING TO RFI-ACT-SACT-25-12

This document contains a Request for Information (RFI) Call to Industry, academia and nations for input to NATO's Innovation Continuum.

Industry, academia and nations wishing to respond to this RFI should read this document carefully and follow the guidance for responding.

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 HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
 RFI-ACT-SACT-25-12

HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation RFI-ACT-SACT-25-12 General Information	
Request For Information No.	RFI-ACT-SACT-25-12
Project Title	INNOVATION CONTINUUM 2025 Events
Due date for questions concerning related information	5:00 PM EST 24 January 2025
Due date for submission of requested information	9:00 AM EST on 07 February 2025
Contracting Office Address	NATO, HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) Purchasing & Contracting Suite 100 7857 Blandy Rd, Norfolk, VA, 23511-2490
Contracting Points of Contact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr Robert Friend Email: Robert.friend@nato.int Tel: +1 757 747 4433 2. Ms Catherine Giglio e-mail: catherine.giglio@nato.int Tel:+1 757-747 3856 3. Ms. Tonya Bonilla E-mail: tonya.bonilla@nato.int Tel: +1 757 747 3575
Technical Point of Contact	LCDR Stefano Aiello stefano.aiello@nato.int
<p>All request for clarifications, questions and responses to this RFI must be sent via email to all Points of Contact reported above. Emails sent to select individuals will not be accepted and should not be sent. All Contracting and Technical POCs must be included in any correspondence.</p>	

1. INTRODUCTION

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to engage with industry, academia and nations to understand state-of-the-art Emerging and Disruptive technologies and innovative projects that could have a positive impact on Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), Critical Undersea Infrastructure Protection (CUIP) and/or Digital Transformation (DT)

This Request for Information (RFI) does not constitute a commitment to issue a future request for proposal (RFP). The purpose of this request is to involve industry through collaboration, in an evaluation of future capabilities related to the implementation of MDO, CUIP and DT.

Further, respondents are advised that HQ SACT will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in responding to this RFI. The costs for responding to this RFI shall be borne solely by the responding party. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any subsequent RFP if issued in the future. All information shared with ACT might be shared with contracted third parties in order to support the capability development process as needed. Provision of data, or lack of, will not prejudice any respondent in the event that there is a competitive bidding process later as part of NATO Common-Funded Capability Development.

2. BACKGROUND

Emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) are transforming daily life and security, offering new opportunities for NATO to enhance effectiveness, resilience, and sustainability while posing significant threats from state and non-state actors. NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept recognizes these dual aspects, committing Allies to promote innovation, increase investments in EDTs, and protect innovation ecosystems to maintain military superiority. NATO's "Foster and Protect" strategy, endorsed in 2021, focuses on developing dual-use technologies and safeguarding against hostile use of EDTs. Key initiatives include the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) and the EUR 1 billion NATO Innovation Fund, which support start-ups and foster transatlantic cooperation on critical technologies.¹

NATO's innovation activities target nine priority areas: AI, autonomous systems, quantum technologies, biotechnology, space, hypersonic systems, novel materials, energy, and next-generation communications. The Data and AI Review Board ensures responsible AI use, while the NATO Advisory Group on EDTs and the Transatlantic Quantum Community facilitate collaboration and optimize innovation efforts.

NATO engages with public and private sectors, academia, and civil society, recognizing the importance of industry engagement, especially with start-ups. The NATO-Ukraine Innovation Cooperation Roadmap highlights the importance of rapid technology adoption in countering adversaries and enhancing interoperability. The Innovation Continuum 2025 underscores NATO's commitment to advancing technological innovation responsibly, focusing on experimentation and demonstration of multi-domain

¹ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_184303.htm , Emerging and disruptive technologies, 08 Aug. 2024

autonomous systems, digital transformation and critical undersea infrastructure protection¹. Through these efforts, NATO aims to address security challenges and ensure member safety in a complex global landscape²

This is not a formal request for submissions as part of a procurement; but rather a general request intended to determine whether any possible solutions exist that should be included in one or many alternatives during the development.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1. Vision

Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is executing a comprehensive Innovation programme of work covering both traditional Science and Technology, and Open Innovation lines of effort. The number of projects in the programme is increasing over the past years and the delivery of valuable outcomes would not be possible without the active involvement of Academia and Industry from NATO nations.

In 2024, ACT reached a milestone under its Innovation Continuum initiative by conducting over 50 experimentation and demonstrations leveraging emerging and disruptive technologies, attracting more than 300 participants. These activities supported key NATO initiatives such as Multi-Domain Operations, critical undersea infrastructure protection and Digital Transformation, proving to be highly effective. The involvement of industry and academia was a key success factor in these efforts. The growth in activities over 2023 reflects the expanding innovation efforts at ACT and across the broader NATO family, including DIANA, the Science and Technology Organization (STO), the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA), Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE) and other NATO bodies³.

The vision for ACT's Innovation Continuum is to provide a scalable framework that accelerates the provision of innovative solutions to the military community through experimentation and demonstration. ACT aims to enable effective collaboration on innovation projects across NATO and member nations to inform warfare development. The framework also seeks to identify interoperability risks and opportunities, as well as orchestrate innovation initiatives across NATO and nations to increase synergies and knowledge sharing. The 2025 events under this framework will focus on advancing Multi-Domain Operations, critical undersea infrastructure protection and Digital Transformation through emerging technologies.

¹ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_231270.htm NATO Allies join forces to enhance the security of critical undersea infrastructure, 10 Dec. 2024

² <https://www.act.nato.int/article/nato-summit-key-declarations/>, NATO Gears Up for a Multi-Domain World: Key Declarations from the 2024 Washington Summit and How Allied Command Transformation Makes Them Happen, July 11, 2024

³ <https://www.act.nato.int/article/natos-innovation-continuum-shine/>, NATO's Innovation Continuum 2024 Culminates in SHINE Event, October 30, 2024

3.2. Objectives

The **2025 INNOVATION CONTINUUM** will be organized around four sequenced phases (Figure 1) of scoping, scenario development, integration and demonstration/experimentation. Each of the phases will be finalized at the milestone events as follows:

- **SPARK Event** (scoping) - to be conducted in Türkiye, 24th – 28th Feb 2025;
- **IGNITE Event** (scenario development)- to be conducted in Canada, (TBC) 5th – 9th May 2025;
- **GLOW Event** (integration) - to be conducted in Italy, (TBC) 1st – 5th Sep 2025;
- **SHINE Event** (experimentation/demonstration) - to be conducted in Türkiye, 13th – 17th Oct 2025.



Figure 1. INNOVATION CONTINUUM Events

The primary focus of the 2025 Innovation Continuum will be Multi-Domain Operations, critical undersea infrastructure protection and Digital Transformation, powered by Emerging and Disruptive Technologies, with special emphasis on multi-domain autonomous systems and the safeguarding of critical undersea infrastructure.

Industry and academia are encouraged to submit their catalogues of the most innovative research and development efforts with potential for transformative military applications related to Multi-Domain Operations, Digital Transformation, multi-domain autonomous systems, and critical undersea infrastructure protection. ACT will review these submissions and invite selected organizations to participate in the 2025 Innovation Continuum. For the most promising proposals, ACT may offer enhanced collaboration opportunities through targeted projects under the Framework for Collaborative Interaction (FFCI).

3.3. Expected Benefits to Respondents

Active participation in the 2025 Innovation Continuum will enable all stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of NATO's approach to Multi-Domain Operations, critical undersea infrastructure protection and Digital Transformation and will provide an opportunity to positively influence ongoing projects within ACT's innovation portfolio. Additionally, their proposals may be selected for participation in events designed to accelerate innovation for military communities. For the most promising proposals, there may be opportunities for deeper collaboration through focused projects. Overall, involvement in the Innovation Continuum could lead to valuable partnerships and contributions to significant defence innovation efforts.

3.4. Expected Benefits to NATO

The submitted proposals may produce solutions that accelerate innovation for NATO's military communities. Promising proposals could result in deeper collaboration through focused projects, helping NATO advance key areas like MDO, CUIP and DT. The evaluation criteria also allow NATO to identify technologies and research that provide opportunities to enhance its capabilities. Overall, the RFI process may lead to valuable innovation and input to inform NATO's defence modernization efforts.

4. REQUESTED INFORMATION

4.1. The response(s) to this RFI shall be submitted by e-mail.

Submissions must include both the Contracting and Technical POCs listed on page 2. The responses shall not contain proprietary and/or classified information. HQ SACT reserves the right to seek clarification on submissions.

4.2. Eligibility to Respond:

Only NATO Nations, Industry and Academia that originate or are chartered/incorporated within NATO Nations are eligible to respond to this RFI.

4.3. Response Template

4.3.1. Provide name, mailing address, overnight delivery address (if different from mailing address), designated point of contact (phone number, e-mail).

4.3.2. Respondents can collaborate with other providers, but all companies/organizations must be clearly identified and their role/services clearly stated.

4.3.3. Response should include at a minimum a technical description and technical architecture diagram of the proposed implementation. Responses are not required to follow any format, but the following is proposed:

- a) Introduction
- b) Assumptions
- c) Technical / System Requirements
- d) Description of Network Implementation & Architecture Views
- e) Recommendations

4.3.4. Identify current services your company offers, which most closely match the capabilities, specified in this RFI (or portions of).

4.3.5. Available product brochures, specification sheets, photographs, illustration and technical descriptions that describe your company's current services are welcome. Companies are encouraged not to include marketing informational materials that do not relate to the services described in this RFI as it will be discarded; however, responses may include URL links to technical documentation materials (i.e., technical data sheets for products) are welcome.

4.3.6. Response limited to a single main document and enclosures for a total not-to-exceed ten (10) A4 / letter size pages (material provided as per paragraph above not included).

4.3.7. The document should be single-spaced, have one-inch margins, assume US letter-size (8 1/2 by 11 inches) page, use 12-point font, and be formatted for compatibility with Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat Reader (current versions).

4.3.8. Submissions should be named according to the following convention: <Respondent company name; maximum of 12 characters>_Innovation Continuum RFI_<date in YYYYMMDD format>.<filename extension of 3 or 4 characters>. Provide a list of your company's past and current customers to which you have provided or are providing similar services, including a customer/company name and point of contact, phone number, and address/e-mail where they can be contacted.

4.3.9. Responses shall not be classified above NATO UNCLASSIFIED.

4.3.10. The information may be considered in developing any future potential Statement of Work requirements. HQ SACT will consider selected information for developmental contracts and experimentation candidates.

4.4. Price Estimates

HQ SACT seeks non-binding Rough Order Magnitude (ROM) price estimates for the sole purpose of estimating programmatic costs and planning funding for future programme proposals/bids. Provision of data, or lack of, will not prejudice any respondent in the event that there is a competitive bidding process later as part of NATO Common Funded Capability Development.

4.5. Response Due Date

Responses to this RFI must be received by **9:00 am EST on 07 February 2025.**

5. CLARIFICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Inquiries of a technical nature about this RFI shall be submitted by e-mail solely to the aforementioned POCs by **5:00 pm EST 24 January 2025.** Accordingly, questions in an e-mail shall not contain proprietary and/or

classified information. Answers will be posted as soon as possible on the HQ SACT P&C website at: <https://www.act.nato.int/opportunities/contracting/>.

All questions should be submitted by **24 January 2025** to allow for appropriate response time prior to the **07 February 2025** response due date.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1. Non-disclosure Principles and/or Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA) with Third Party Company.

6.1.1. Please be informed that HQ SACT may contract a company to conduct the Analysis of Alternatives investigation in support of this project. HQ SACT will follow nondisclosure principles and possibly conclude an NDA with that company to protect submitted information from further disclosure. As the third-party beneficiary of this nondisclosure, this RFI serves to inform you how HQ SACT plans to proceed and HQ SACT's intent to protect information from unauthorized disclosure. This requires the third-party company to protect the disclosed information using the highest degree of care that the company utilizes to protect its own Proprietary Information of a similar nature, and no less than reasonable care.

6.1.2. The third-party company receiving the information shall not, without explicit, written consent of HQ SACT:

- a) Discuss, disclose, publish or disseminate any Proprietary Information received or accessed under nondisclosure principles and subject to an NDA, if an NDA is concluded;
- b) Use disclosed Proprietary Information in any way except for the purpose for which it was disclosed in furtherance of the goals of the instant project, collaboration, activity or contract;
or
- c) Mention the other Party or disclose the relationship including, without limitation, in marketing materials, presentations, press releases or interview.

6.2. Organizational Conflicts of Interest.

As Procurement/Contracting involves the expenditure of funds allocated by the member nations, we must always strive to maintain trust in and preserve the integrity of the procurement procedures. It is essential that our procedures facilitate transparent and robust competition from industry.

Contractor and subcontractor personnel performing work under an HQ SACT contract may receive, have access to, or participate in the development of sensitive information relating to source selection methodology, cost or pricing information, budget information, and future specifications, requirements or Statements of Work or perform evaluation services that may create a current or subsequent

Organizational Conflict of Interests (OCI). Similarly, companies responding to an HQ SACT RFI may create a subsequent OCI determination when pursuing future NATO contracts generated from that RFI.

Each individual contracting situation will of course be examined on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of any proposed contract. The exercise of common sense, good judgment, and sound discretion is required in both the decision on whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, the development of an appropriate means for resolving it.

In anticipation of a future OCI determination, any company either awarded an HQ SACT contract or responding to an HQ SACT RFI while also anticipating bidding on future NATO contracts relating to this work, should consider having a mitigation plan in place to address or mitigate any OCI concerns now or in the future.

6.3. Handling of Proprietary Information

Proprietary information, if any, should be minimized and clearly marked as such. HQ SACT will treat proprietary information with the same due care as the command treats its own proprietary information. HQ SACT will exercise due care to prevent its unauthorized disclosure. Please be advised that all submissions become HQ SACT property and will not be returned.

6.4. Exceptions to Obligations. The third-party company receiving the information may disclose, publish, disseminate, and use Proprietary Information:

- a) To its employees, officers, directors, contractors, and affiliates of the recipient who have a need to know and who have an organizational code of conduct or written agreement with the recipient requiring them to treat the disclosed Proprietary Information in accordance with nondisclosure principles and the NDA (if executed);
- b) To the extent required by law; however, the company receiving the information will give HQ SACT prompt notice to allow HQ SACT a reasonable opportunity to obtain a protective order or otherwise protect the disclosed information through legal process that is:
 - demonstrated in written record to have been developed independently, or
 - already in the possession of the company receiving the information without obligation of confidentiality, prior to the date of receipt from HQ SACT, or
 - disclosed or used with prior written approval from HQ SACT, or
 - obtained from a source other than HQ SACT without obligation of confidentiality; or publicly available when received.

6.5. Any response to this RFI is considered to establish consent to this process. A copy of the NDA, if or when concluded, can be provided on request.

7. QUALIFICATION PROCEDURE

Due to the expected high volume of applicants and the limited available time slots at the **2025 INNOVATION CONTINUUM events**, there is a qualification procedure to be followed for identification of the selected organizations. To ensure transparency and fairness for participating organizations, HQ SACT will use the following criteria when evaluating submissions:

- Does the proposed solution present an acceleration opportunity for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) operationalization, critical undersea infrastructure protection or Digital Transformation (DT) implementation?
- How does the proposed solution enhance the protection of critical undersea infrastructure or integrate with multi-domain autonomous systems?
- Has the institution previously introduced disruptive technologies or innovative business practices to the market?
- Does the institution present a finished and viable product/service with significant military applications for review and demonstration?
- Is the list of proposals considered inventive, innovative, or disruptive?
- What is the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the products/services presented?
- Are there existing use cases that demonstrate the effectiveness of the products/services?
- Is the institution headquartered in a NATO Nation? If not, the company will be considered administratively non-compliant.
- Does the institution have a proven track record of delivering projects on time and within budget?
- How does the proposed solution address interoperability with current NATO systems and technologies?
- Does the institution have a robust plan for ongoing support, maintenance, and future development of the proposed solution?

The answer to this RFI should be submitted by e-mail to the Points of Contact listed above, page 2.

8. SUMMARY

This is an RFI only. The purpose of this RFI is to involve industry/academia, through collaboration, in an examination of future capabilities related to the Innovation Continuum with a focus on technologies and commercial products. HQ SACT has not made a commitment to procure any of the items described herein, and release of this RFI shall not be construed as such a commitment, nor as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement will be required or sought. **It is emphasized that this is an RFI, and not an RFP of any kind.**