

**Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
Norfolk Virginia**



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
RFI-ACT-SACT-22-05**

This document contains a Request for Information (RFI) Call for Nations and Industry input to NATO's IT Modernisation (ITM) Capability.

Suppliers wishing to respond to this RFI should read this document carefully and follow the guidance for responding.

This RFI is open to NATO Nations and Academia/Industry located in NATO Nations.

HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation

HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation RFI 22-05	
General Information	
Request For Information No.	22-05
Project Title	Request for Nations and industry input to NATO's ITM Capability.
Due date for submission of requested information	31 January 2022
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	1. Ms Tonya Bonilla e-mail : tonya.bonilla@act.nato.int Tel : +1 757 747 3575 2. Ms Catherine Giglio e-mail : catherine.giglio@act.nato.int Tel : +1 757 747 3856
Technical Points of Contact	1. Dr Arnau Pons, e-mail : arnau.pons@act.nato.int Tel : +1 757 747 3876 2. Philip Deans e-mail: Philip.deans@act.nato.int Tel: +1 757-747-3746

1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Summary.** Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) in order to engage with Nations and industry. The intention is to establish the art-of-the-possible and state-of-the-art with respect to technologies and products in the area of networks and data management in order to support NATO Governance decision-making on a Common-Funded Capability Development for the future, the NATO ITM.

1.2. This request for information does not constitute a commitment to issue a future request for proposal (RFP). The purpose of this request is to involve Nations and industry through collaboration, in an examination of future capabilities related to ITM with a focus on IT 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 authorisation to incur cost for which reimbursement will be required or sought. 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.

2 – GENERAL BACKGROUND: ACT Framework for Collaborative Interaction (FFCI)

2.1 ACT has implemented a Framework for Collaborative Interaction (FFCI) to increase opportunities for industry and academia to contribute to ACT capability development efforts through collaborative work. Such collaboration enables HQ SACT, and NATO as a whole, to benefit from industry/academia models, advice, capabilities and experience in the course of this work. In addition to the benefits HQ SACT gains from such projects, this collaborative effort will provide industry / academia with an improved understanding of NATO's capability requirements and the associated issues and development challenges to be addressed by HQ SACT. Potential collaborative projects are on specific topics that are of mutual interest to both parties but shall be restricted to collaborations in non-procurement areas. Several mechanisms have been already developed to support the initiation of collaborative projects between industry/academia and ACT ranging from informal information exchanges, workshops, studies or more extensive collaboration on research and experimentation.

2.2 Depending on the level and type of interaction needed for a collaborative project, a specific agreement may be needed between parties. The FFCI agreement for any specific project, if required by either party for the project to proceed, will range from "Non-disclosure Agreements" (NDA) for projects involving exchange of specific information to more extensive "Declaration of Mutual Collaboration" (DOMC) to address intellectual property and other issues.

2.3 More extensive information on the ACT FFCI initiative can be found on the ACT web site being developed to support FFCI projects at <http://www.act.nato.int/ffci>.

2.4 No FFCI agreement is required to respond to this RFI. However, the principles underlying the FFCI initiative apply to this RFI.

3 - DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

3.1 Programme Vision

3.1.1 The overall NATO IT Modernisation vision can be described as moving from a highly decentralized environment with each location possessing and operating their own equipment, expert servicing and capabilities, towards a centrally managed, centralized IT infrastructure providing services to Standard Nodes or consumer sites in two domains (PBN and ON), providing IaaS, utilizing centralized provisioning, a centralized Service Operations Centre(s) to manage the infrastructure, and Service Operations. The networks are described as follows:

- PBN: the Protected Business Network will enable communication of information up to NATO RESTRICTED across the NATO enterprise.
- ON: the Operational Network will enable communication of information up to NATO SECRET across the NATO enterprise.

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The scope of this RFI is to provide a centralized PBN (Protected Business Network) allowing for NATO information up to NATO RESTRICTED and providing the data storage and processing capacity necessary for the network and data synchronization across applications, services, distributed across the enterprise. Initially this will impact 15 000 users at 18 main locations in 11 countries under the Strategic Commands, but shall be scalable to the entire NATO enterprise consisting of approximately 25 000 users at 32 main locations in 13 countries. Moreover, operational bases, exercises and other locations will also require ITM capabilities.

3.1.2 The vision under the scope of this RFI is that core services will provide Enterprise-wide collaboration up to NATO RESTRICTED (NR) within the various Communities of Interest (COI), across all commands and elements of the NATO Enterprise and, where appropriate, to Nations.

3.1.3 The NATO ITM capability is currently in the development phase of the capability programme plan. This plan aims to deliver the required capability described within the capability programme plan by directing the necessary actions across the NATO-recognised lines of development including: doctrine, organisation, training, materiel (including software), leadership, personnel, facilities and interoperability.

3.1.4 Amongst other aims, the Capability Programme Plan intends to analyse alternative options to deliver this capability. This is achieved by:

- the identification of different available alternatives to satisfy the defined requirements.
- careful analysis to compare the operational effectiveness, risk and life cycle costs of each alternative.

3.1.5 The analysis process is designed to assist decision makers select solutions that offer the Alliance value for money. Outline programme options available include consideration of “Adopt”-ing a solution (from Nations), “Buy”-ing (acquiring a solution from Industry), or “Create”-ing (developing a solution bespoke to NATO).

3.2 Intent/Objectives.

3.2.1 To support the transformational change of how NATO ITM will provide future operational support, a robust Analysis of Alternatives is needed across the Adopt, Buy, and Create space to identify and determine relevant technologies and products existing within the commercial market.

3.2.2 This request for information is intended to provide Nations and industry an opportunity to provide information that would allow NATO to identify prospective products, systems or sub-systems and their potential benefits to the delivery of the NATO ITM network and data management. This is not a formal request for submissions as part of a procurement; it is intended to provide support to subsequent and additional in-depth survey to determine possible systems or products, which should be identified in the development of the Capability Programme Plan.

3.3 Expected benefits to respondents

3.3.1 Nations and Industry participants will have the chance to expose NATO ITM operators and subject matter experts to state of the art technologies and products.

3.4 Expected input from industry/academia.

3.4.1 Expected input to this RFI is Nations and industry perspective on relevant current and future technologies and products.

4 - REQUESTED INFORMATION

The requested information is embedded in the attached excel file.

4.1 Answers to the RFI.

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

4.2 Follow-on.

4.2.1 The data collected in response to this RFI will be used to develop a report to inform the NATO ITM programme. The data collected will be used to provide an assessment to support a decision as to whether NATO should pursue an Adopt, Buy, or Create approach to future ITM products and services.

4.2.2 **Non-disclosure.** Non-disclosure principles and/or nondisclosure agreement (NDA) with third party company

4.2.2.1 HQ SACT will follow non-disclosure principles and possibly conclude an NDA with any companies to protect submitted information from further disclosure. As the third party beneficiary of this nondisclosure, this RFI serves to inform you of how HQ SACT plans to proceed and of HQ SACT's intent to protect information from unauthorized disclosure, requiring 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. This includes the following responsibilities and obligations:

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

- Discuss, disclose, publish or disseminate any Proprietary Information received or accessed under nondisclosure principles and subject to an NDA, if an NDA is concluded;
- 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
- Mention the other Party or disclose the relationship including, without limitation, in marketing materials, presentations, press releases or interviews.

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

- 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

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Proprietary Information in accordance with nondisclosure principles and the NDA (if executed);

- 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; or
- 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; that is disclosed or used with prior written approval from HQ SACT; obtained from a source other than HQ SACT without obligation of confidentiality; or publicly available when received.

4.2.2.2 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.

4.3. **Organizational Conflicts of Interest.** Companies responding to this RFI are hereby placed on notice responding to this RFI could conceivably create an organizational conflict of interest (OCI) on a future procurement, if a future procurement were to occur within the capability development process. Companies are cautioned to consider OCI when responding to this RFI, and to consider internal mitigation measures that would prevent OCI's from adversely affecting a company's future procurement prospects. OCI's can often be mitigated or prevented with simple, early acquisition analysis and planning and the use of barriers, teaming arrangements, internal corporate nondisclosure policies and firewalls, and similar prophylactic measures. HQ SACT is not in a position to advise responding companies on the existence of OCI or remedial measures, and encourages responding companies to consult internal or external procurement and legal consultants and in-house counsel.

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

4.5 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

4.6 **Questions.** Questions of a technical nature about this RFI announcement shall be submitted by e-mail solely to the above-mentioned POCs. Accordingly, questions in an e-mail shall not contain proprietary and/or classified information. Answers will be posted on the HQ SACT P&C website at: www.act.nato.int/contracting-procurements.

4.7 **Response Date.** 31 January 2022

4.8 **Summary. This is a RFI only. The purpose of this RFI is to involve Nations/industry/academia, through collaboration,** in an examination of future

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capabilities related to NATO's ITM with a focus on the IT 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 a RFI, and not a RFP of any kind.

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