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Planning

UK2 - Preliminary Market Engagement 2

Defence Equipment and Support

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-027744

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05034c ([view related notices](#))

Published 27 May 2025, 1:36pm

Scope

Reference

714672450 PROJECT CORVUS

Description

The purpose of this Preliminary Market Engagement Notice is to provide answers to clarification questions asked following the previous notice: <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/015277-2025>.

Due to the announcement made by the Secretary of State for Defence to the House of Commons on Wednesday 20th November 2024, the Army are seeking to replace the Watchkeeper system with a new Uncrewed Air System (UAS) to deliver the Land Tactical Deep Find (LTDF) 24hr persistent surveillance requirement; under the title Project CORVUS.

Project CORVUS is a CAT B procurement that has been launched in order to procure a new UAS to meet the Army's LTDF requirement, with the stretch target of a Minimum Deployable Capability in calendar year 2025.

Defence Equipment and Support are the Contracting Authority, and the information contained within this notice is subject to contract and subject to change at the Authority's sole discretion.

Overview of the Requirement:

With the UAS market being an increasingly evolving sector, the Army are seeking to procure a modern, deployable, easily supportable and cost-effective capability. Delivery would be across all the Defence Lines of Development (DLoD) but as this is replacing a pre-existing capability, it is preferable the CORVUS capability minimises the pan-DLoD changes required to the Army as the operator.

The Authority envisage that the single Contract will be let to an Original Equipment Manufacturer / Prime Contractor who will be required to provide the equipment and support to meet the Army's requirements. The solution must be of a high readiness level, be technologically agile, and capable of undergoing spiral development in future years to meet continuously evolving requirements.

The Authority expect this capability to be acquired through a competitive procurement run under the Procurement Act 2023 regulations.

There is currently an expectation that down-selected Tenderers will be required to conduct a live demonstration of their capability, with the details of the demonstration and location yet to be determined. The location may either be a UK Military Facility or at the OEMs designated premises. However, in order to achieve the demonstration, the Authority believe that there will need to be CAA / MAA / EASA or equivalent clearances in place or close to approval.

Total value (estimated)

- £130,000,000 excluding VAT
- £156,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 30 April 2026 to 30 April 2031

- Possible extension to 30 April 2036
- 10 years, 1 day

Main procurement category

Goods

CPV classifications

- 35613000 - Unmanned aerial vehicles

Engagement

Engagement deadline

30 September 2025

Engagement process description

Project Corvus Clarification Questions (CQs)

Procurement Act 2023

Issue 001

In the interests of transparency, please find below a list of fifteen (15) clarification questions relating to Project Corvus and, where known, answers to these questions.

Further notices will be published in due course on the 'Find a Tender Service' and 'DSP.'

The current anticipated timeline for full ITT to be published is by Quarter 3 (three) Tax Year 2025/26.

All KURs are being reviewed and final requirements will be shared within the Tender documents.

The Authority envisage that the single Contract will be let to an Original Equipment Manufacturer / Prime Contractor who will be required to provide the equipment and support to meet the Army's requirements. The solution must be of a high readiness level, be technologically agile, and capable of undergoing spiral development in future years to meet continuously evolving requirements.

Interested parties are encouraged to be working towards Cyber Essentials + accreditation prior to the launch of the full Tender.

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Question 1: Is there an upper weight limit or anything that caps the size of the platform being offered?

Answer 1: We are not specifying an upper size limit; however, survivability and tactical mobility are key considerations that will be balanced against the size of any platform.

Question 2: We would like to raise a CQ to ask if it is permissible to share content relating to the CORVUS requirements with a third party subcontractor, who is non UK based?

Answer 2: All information available on 'Find a Tender Service' is able to be shared. However, during future phases of the procurement, information classifications may change. Handling instructions for higher classifications of information will be shared as appropriate in advance utilising a Security Aspects Letter (SAL) and guidance as appropriate.

Question 3: How are you planning to procure the security assurance required to validate that the UAS' you procure are suitable from a security perspective and do in fact meet your requirements?

We noted that you expected the procured UAS' to be secure by design.

Will the supplier need to provide evidence of this, or do you require independent third party assurance that this is the case? If the latter, what route to market will you use to procure those professional services?

Answer 3: We would expect the supplier to have done this testing, providing appropriate evidence for Requirement Acceptance.

Where additional assurance is required (for example in support of the Air System Safety Case or the Secure by Design requirement) independent assurance may be needed. This will be secured via the DE&S Single Front Door to determine whether the service is provided by Expert Services or a Delivery Partner.

Question 4: Will there be a new Industry Engagement event?

Answer 4: We are unable to provide any additional details at this time. All future notices will be published on 'Find a Tender Service' and within 'DSP'.

Question 5: Please can you confirm if this opportunity is being procured through the HMT Framework, or if it is open to all suppliers?

Answer 5: The project will be run under the Procurement Act 2023 regime and is therefore open to all suppliers. All future notices will be published on 'Find a Tender Service' and within 'DSP'.

Question 6: Please can you confirm whether the intent is to require the embodiment of an approved Detect and Avoid capability?

Answer 6: There is no threshold requirement for detect and avoid, but a detect and avoid system will be considered as part of the Air System Safety Case as part of the Layered Safety approach.

Question 7: KUR 2. Sense (ISTAR and Targeting). What NIIIRS levels and accuracies of detection ranges and geolocation are required for DRI? This is likely to determine the size of payload and thus the type/size of the AV. Is COMINT/ELINT required?

Answer 7: Following feedback from Industry, KUR performance guidance is being reviewed. Updated KUR details will be published later in the year.

Question 8: KUR 4. Survivability. What is the definition of a denied environment? Is it from take-off to landing or only over the target area? What is the definition of "Contested airspace"? What is defined as GNSS denial – GPS denial or Spoofing? What is the level of interference on EMS?

Answer 8: Following feedback from Industry, KUR performance guidance is being reviewed. Updated KUR details will be published later in the year.

Question 9: KUR 5. Deploy and Sustain Operations. Can the definition of "Specific environments" be clearly defined in terms of meteorological and environmental.

Answer 9: Following feedback from Industry, KUR performance guidance is being reviewed. Updated KUR details will be published later in the year.

Question 10: KUR 8. Capability Development. What is the MOD's Spiral Development priorities? What are the update cycles envisaged?

Answer 10: Following feedback from Industry, KUR performance guidance is being reviewed. Updated KUR details will be published later in the year.

Question 11: KUR 9. Policy Compliance. Clarification requested on standards to be applied. KUR 9 clearly states MAA, but the RFI also refers to "... the Authority believes that there will need to be CAA/MAA/EASA or equivalent approvals..." .

Answer 11: An approval (e.g. CAA, MAA, EASA) will be required for any demonstrations held as part of the tender process. Full MAA approval will be required for the selected system before entry into service and will be achieved as part of the project delivery.

Question 12: We recently became aware of Project CORVUS, however, by the time we did the RFI deadline had passed

Answer 12: The RFI is not a pre-requisite to engaging in future phases of the procurement. Please keep watch for future notices and publications which will be made within 'DSP' and 'Find a Tender service'.

Question 13: As part of the system solution is the requirement to supply all the vehicles to support the 2 x TL's, i.e. REME vehicles/ G4 logs vehicles or will these be current in-service vehicles such as LR, EPLS or MAN SV trucks?

Answer 13: The transport solution is for the CORVUS specific element only (i.e. GCS and Air Vehicles). 47 Regt RA will maintain their current Basic User Fleet (BUF) for the transportation of personnel and non-CORVUS specific equipment.

Question 14: We would like to understand if the training requirement is mainly focused on the flying crews, L&R and maintainers, or will Op's staff also form part of the requirement?

Answer 14: The minimum training requirement will be for the conversion of flying crews, launch and recovery (L&R) personnel and maintainers only. However, if there are any specific communications systems or software that will be used by the Signallers or Operations staff then training should be provided for that as well. It is also recognised that wider training will be required for the full delivery of the Land Tactical Deep Find capability that may be delivered by CORVUS. This will be informed by a full Training Needs Analysis that will be conducted to support the delivery of the project.

Question 15: If a full new vehicle type / fleet for the system and support elements is required, does driving and maintainer training on the new vehicle variant also form part of the requirement?

Answer 15: Depending on the vehicle type, driver training / familiarisation and maintainer training would be required, unless it is already available through the military (e.g. driving licence training / examination would not be required if the vehicle requires a C licence).

- End -

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

31 October 2025

Procedure

Special regime

Defence and security

Contracting authority

Defence Equipment and Support

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PVRL-5831-GLMM

MOD Abbey Wood

Bristol

BS34 8JH

United Kingdom

Contact name: Rachel Barnes

Email: rachel.barnes852@mod.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-equipment-and-support>

Region: UKK12 - Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Organisation type: Public authority - central government