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Planning

Teutates Programme - Waste Repatriation Strategy

Atomic Weapons Establishment

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

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Changes to notice

This notice has been edited. The [previous version](#) is still available.

The updated notice corrects a contradiction in deadline dates contained within the notice. The deadline for the notice is 20th June 2025 and any references to dates other than this have been amended accordingly.

Scope

Reference

AWE01236

Description

1. Purpose -

AWE Plc (AWE) is conducting this preliminary market engagement exercise to inform potential suppliers about our immediate and future requirements and to gather information on the capabilities and appetite in the market to support our Waste Repatriation Strategy for the Teutates Programme. The immediate focus will be to conduct a series of studies that will inform and shape the future delivery model.

The purpose is to engage with suppliers that can assist AWE in developing and refining its understanding of market experience and capability, which will shape the future delivery strategy for Teutates Waste Repatriation ahead of any potential future procurement procedures that follow.

2. Background

The UK government is fully committed to our independent, continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent, and through its 'triple lock pledge', to delivering the upgrades and programmes necessary to maintain and renew the country's defence nuclear capabilities. The scale and complexity of the work required is a critical National Endeavour and includes substantial investment across the Defence Nuclear Enterprise.

In 2010, the United Kingdom and France, agreed to a series of measures intended to enhance defence cooperation between both countries. This included the signing of two new defence treaties, one on general defence and security cooperation, and one on nuclear cooperation.

Teutates is a joint programme centred around shared radiographic and hydrodynamics research. The initial stages of the programme have focused on the location, specification and construction of required research facilities in the UK and France. As we progress, the next phase of the Teutates programme is focusing on the Teutates Asset Lifecycle, involving the movement and management of materials and assets between France and the UK.

Trials will be conducted at the France based research facility within safety certified containment vessels, following which all used vessels containing waste material will be repatriated back to the UK. The Teutates programme must determine how it will package, transport, store (short and long term), clean out and recertify or dispose of both Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) and Low Level Waste (LLW) vessels.

Vessels containing ILW will be put into UK long term storage before disposal within a geological disposal facility (GDF). Vessels containing LLW will be cleaned out in the UK, recertified, and reintroduced into the trials programme.

3. Requirements

In this market engagement, AWE is seeking initial expressions of interest from suppliers for both 'immediate' and / or 'future' requirements as outlined below, as pertains to the Capability Areas described in Section 4.

Immediate Requirements

AWE intends to commission a series of studies to help validate and inform the development of the requirements for the delivery model of this capability. Section 4 describes the high level breakdown of capability requirements that combine together to provide the Teutates Asset Lifecycle support.

We intend to leverage industry expertise for these studies and are seeking to identify potential suppliers through this notice. It is anticipated the studies will take between 6 and 12 months to complete and will be undertaken between 2026 and 2027.

The estimated budget for delivering these studies is between £5m to £10m.

Future Requirements

The future infrastructure requirements and delivery model for the Waste Repatriation will be informed by the output of these studies and any market engagement received as part of this notice. Therefore AWE seeks to identify potential suppliers for the delivery phase of this requirement through this market engagement exercise.

Outline programme timescales for the delivery phase are still being finalised, however many of the transportation methods & routes, storage facilities and clean out & disposal/recertification capabilities will need to be operational in the next 5 years.

Following the output from these studies, AWE will be able to develop and refine our delivery model strategy.

4. Teutates Asset Lifecycle Capability Requirements

The scope of the Teutates Asset Lifecycle is currently broken out into the following activities:

Capability Area 1: LLW Transportation & Packaging

a) Preparation & packaging (e.g. transport trailer, container or package, associated furniture or tie down fixings) for post-trial (containing LLW) vessel transportation from France to UK

b) Methods & routes for post-trial vessel transportation from France to UK

Capability Area 2: LLW Storage facilities

a) A LLW storage and packaging facility located in France prior to transportation of vessels back to the UK. This storage, prep and packaging facility will be at a single location.

b) A LLW storage facility in the UK for vessels prior to clean out

Capability Area 3: LLW Clean out capabilities/methodologies

a) The clean out of vessels in the UK prior to recertification or disposal

Capability Area 4: LLW Recertification/Disposal capabilities

a) An agreed recertification process for vessels that can be reused

b) An agreed disposal method & route for vessels that cannot be reused

Capability Area 5: ILW Transportation & Packaging

a) Preparation & packaging for vessel transportation from France to UK

b) Methods & routes for vessel transportation from France to UK

Capability Area 6: ILW Storage facilities

a) An interim ILW storage facility in the UK for vessels prior to disposal in the GDF

Capability Area 7: Other capabilities for both V5X and V6X vessels.

a) Preparation & packaging for transport of clean (pre-trial) vessels from UK to France.

b) Methods & routes for clean vessel transportation from UK to France

c) A UK clean vessel store for pre-trial and recertified vessels

d) A facility located in France to store clean vessels prior to trials

e) Preparatory activity to allow for the eventual compliant transfer of ILW waste from an interim storage facility to the GDP-notably in developing the Disposability Assessment/Letter of Compliance (LoC) process

5. Supporting Information

Demand Volumes

Information on specific cadence, volume and duration of waste management activity is still under development, however AWE anticipates a programme spanning multiple decades in line with the Treaty durations. The eventual throughput for transport, storage and cleanout requirements will be derived from this programme - for reference purposes only, a minimum requirement may be considered as:

- 1 ILW trial per year (V5X Vessel)
- 3 LLW trials per year (V5x or V6X vessels)

Vessel Description

Two types of vessels will be used for purposes of hydrodynamic trials, named V5X and V6X.

V5X

The V5X vessel is an inverted bell form, mounted vertically within a fabricated carbon steel stand. The Stand and vessel is 2000m x 2000mm x 2030mm high and will be 12100kg of total mass post-trial

V6X

The V6X vessel is an inverted bell form, mounted vertically within a fabricated carbon steel stand. The Stand and vessel is 2230m x 2230mm x 2800mm high and will be of 28000kg of total mass post trial.

Total value (estimated)

- £10,000,000 excluding VAT
- £12,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 6 March 2026 to 1 October 2027
- 1 year, 6 months, 27 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 73210000 - Research consultancy services
- 73220000 - Development consultancy services
- 90521000 - Radioactive waste treatment services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom
- FR - France

Engagement

Engagement deadline

20 June 2025

Engagement process description

Suppliers who wish to participate in this pre-market engagement will be required to submit a proforma and a signed Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) as part of the process. Firstly, suppliers are invited to register your intent to supply an Expression of Interest (EoI) by contacting this address teutatescommercial@awe.co.uk, including in the subject of your email "Teutates Waste Repatriation" and quoting the following reference number AWE01236.

Suppliers will then be provided a copy of the proforma and NDA, which will need to be completed and returned together with your EoI submission. The submission of your NDA does not constitute a complete and approved NDA as the NDA will need to go through internal processes and approvals. We will let you know the outcome of your NDA post EoI submission.

In registering an interest, you are requested to state whether this is for the delivery of the initial studies phase (immediate requirements) and/or providing the infrastructure and or delivery capabilities for (future requirements) the Teutates Asset Lifecycle. Where suppliers are able to provide end-to-end or integrated solutions across different capability areas please describe these in your response.

Suppliers are requested to clearly indicate which of the Teutates Asset Lifecycle activities is / are of interest, with reference to the scope as set out above (1 - 7). It would also be advantageous for suppliers to set out their experience and existing capabilities in the provision of similar services.

Please limit any written responses to no more than 2 pages A4 (Font Arial, Size 11), PDF converted. Responses should be emailed to teutatescommercial@awe.co.uk by the deadline of 20th June 2025.

Following receipt of an EoI AWE will need to countersign and return the NDA before commencing any follow-on pre-market engagement activities. AWE will issue a further Request For Information (RFI) based on specific response to capability areas you have expressed an interest for. This will explore in more detail relevant market attributes covering contracting and commercial models, solution types and capacity to deliver outputs required. Dependant on the extent of market response, AWE will also arrange more interactive supplier engagement activity to including a briefing session and/or direct dialogue. There will also be a request for suppliers to evidence their authority/regulatory compliance to contract with AWE and in the UK as part of these engagement activities.

All information and material collected from these pre-market engagement activities will be documented and may be subject to public disclosure in line with UK Public procurement

regulations, respecting commercial confidentiality.

Expressions of interest and participation in the pre-market engagement activities does not preference or preclude participation in future tender activities in this project.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

1 September 2025

Procedure

Special regime

Defence and security

Contracting authority

Atomic Weapons Establishment

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PYCH-2579-LGTN

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Reading

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United Kingdom

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Organisation type: Public authority - central government