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Award

NEXUS to Core - Sustain and Grow the Air Information Platform

Ministry of Defence

UK5: Transparency notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Scope

Description

The NEXUS to Core (N2C) Programme is the creation and sustainment of a digital infrastructure (cloud-based platform) on which to deploy applications and software to enable war fighters to make timely decisions while in the air. NEXUS is the infrastructure which provides integrated solutions for secure processing, connectivity, and data management that will create decision superiority by delivering relevant information and capabilities to aircraft.

Work Package 3 – Sustain and Grow AIP. Growth of the AIP includes the onboarding and ingestion of new information sources, integration with new customers, and expansion to new networks. Grow AIP activity starts with mapping the platform feeds, the stakeholders and an impact assessment which evaluates the scope and complexity associated with the growth activity. If the activity requires unique development, Grow AIP will be responsible for developing any necessary changes and will deliver these changes to integration which will be the responsibility of the Sustain AIP activity.

Contract 1. NEXUS to Core - Sustain and Grow the Air Information Platform

Supplier

- Sixworks Limited

Contract value

- £19,680,000 excluding VAT
- £24,600,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Earliest date the contract will be signed

16 March 2026

Contract dates (estimated)

- 30 March 2026 to 31 March 2031
- Possible extension to 1 March 2034
- 7 years, 11 months, 3 days

Description of possible extension:

Includes optional extension of 3x (+1)

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 72227000 - Software integration consultancy services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Other information

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Direct award

Direct award justification

- Single supplier - intellectual property or exclusive rights
- Single supplier - technical reasons
- Additional or repeat goods, services or works - extension or partial replacement
- Defence and security - necessary to enhance or maintain operational capability, effectiveness, readiness for action, safety or security of the armed forces

The NEXUS to Core (N2C) Programme will deliver a cloud-based Data Fabric for Air that provides Decision Superiority for the warfighter by connecting any Sensor to any Effector across all domains and multiple classifications.

Work Package 3 is to 'Sustain and Grow the Air Information Platform (AIP)'. The AIP is the fundamental enabling component of the NEXUS architecture. Sustainment of the AIP is critical to maintaining the integrity of the existing solution. Growth of the AIP includes the onboarding and ingestion of new data feeds and integration with systems, services and allies across all domains and multiple classifications.

The Rapid Capability Office (RCO) placed a Single Source Qualifying Defence Contract (QDC) called Titan II with SixWorks on 26th April 2021 with an end date of the 31st of March 2024. The Titan II contract had two 6-month optional extensions available which the RCO actioned to provide cover for the existing requirement as well as a 12-month extension until March 2026. The mandate of the N2C Pg is to bring the DARKSTAR OCD into core and develop it into a warfighting capability.

The NEXUS Programme, which is a collection of 5 Work Packages which are mutually dependent, are to be procured for a 5-year period after which it will transition into the next iteration of the capability. This contact must be 5 years in duration to align with the other WPs to ensure the successful output of the programme as a whole.

Additional or repeat goods, services or works (Schedule 5, Paragraph 7)

Schedule 5, paragraph 7 allows for the direct award of a contract for further goods, services or works where a change in supplier would result in goods, services or works that are different from, or incompatible with, the existing goods, services or works which would result in disproportionate technical difficulties in operation or maintenance.

The requirement is to procure additional goods and services which are compatible with existing provisions. Under the Act, a direct award may be made where a change of supplier would result in the contracting authority receiving goods, services or works that are different from, or incompatible with the existing solution and where this incompatibility would result in disproportionate technical difficulties in maintenance or operation.

SixWorks have implemented the OCD solution, the maintenance and transition of which is integral to the successful delivery of WP3. Any change in supplier at this stage would introduce significant technical difficulties that could compromise the operational integrity of the NEXUS platform. These would include incompatibilities in system architecture, requiring redevelopment of bespoke interfaces, APIs, and orchestration mechanisms that have been specifically tailored by SixWorks to support ingestion, standardisation, and dissemination of mission-critical data. A new supplier would also lack the embedded system knowledge and familiarity with existing configurations—much of which is undocumented—leading to a steep learning curve and reduced effectiveness in sustaining and developing the platform. This could result in slower fault resolution, limited responsiveness to evolving operational requirements, and potential loss of key monitoring and telemetry functions. As a consequence, there is a clear risk of capability regression during the transition period, which would impact the platform's ability to support time-sensitive operational decision-making and degrade the user community's confidence in the service.

Retaining the incumbent supplier ensures delivery momentum, preserves continuity of platform architecture, and avoids duplication of effort. It represents best value for money by leveraging existing investment and sustaining delivery of a platform that is already embedded in the Authority's cloud and data ecosystem. A transition to an alternative supplier at this stage would undermine agility, delay operational benefit realisation, and contradict established MOD guidance on cost-effective exploitation of sovereign digital capability.

Single Supplier (Schedule 5, Paragraph 6)

The data platform that underpins the NEXUS capability has been architected and developed by SixWorks under the Titan II contract. While Intellectual Property Rights remain vested in the Authority, due to the bespoke nature of the solution, the supplier retains substantial technical know-how and architectural familiarity which cannot be replicated or transferred without significant rework, cost and risk; the underlying solution comprises customer code, orchestration logic, and data integration framework that is tightly coupled to the SixWorks implementation. Re-competing the requirement would require an alternative supplier to engage in an extensive and time-consuming discovery phase to understand and rebuild the existing platform capability, thereby introducing operational risk, service disruption, and additional cost. To maintain continuity of service and to avoid compromising the programme, a single source approach is proposed. The risk of divergence from the original design intent further threatens platform integrity and supportability.

In addition, any other supplier contracted to fulfil this requirement would require a significant amount of time and resource to understand and be able to effectively work with the current solution. This would lead to a capability gap while the new supplier is faced with interoperability, security and knowledge challenges. This gap would be intolerable to

not only the NEXUS to Core Programme, but also to associated Programmes critical to Defence output, within UK Defence as well as our allies'. This includes the StratCom C2 Programme of Record which seeks to cohere operational C2 across all Front Line Commands (FLCs) including the Single Information Environment (SInfoE). NEXUS provides a means by which to interoperate with the other FLCs including the Army ZODIAC Programme and the Navy StrikeNet Programme. The capability gap from competing this requirement would affect the ability of the RAF to collaborate with other FLCs which would pose an intolerable risk. It would also impact the interoperability with the US Air Force (USAF) and their associated Programme (ABMS). Finally, NEXUS is key for Air interoperability with the NATO Data Fabric for Shared Situational Awareness and operational planning. The vision statement of N2C includes delivery of a single data layer to enable the warfighter to move, manipulate and display NEXUS data as a Common Operating Picture which is interoperable across our allies and partners. Any deviation in the system in current use would result in risks to the interoperability of our nations' systems and potentially risk the delivery of this requirement. There is therefore, absent competition in the market place due to technical requirements of this solution.

Supplier

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Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. NEXUS to Core - Sustain and Grow the Air Information Platform

Contracting authority

Ministry of Defence

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PHVX-4316-ZVGZ

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Region: UKJ13 - Buckinghamshire CC

Organisation type: Public authority - central government