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Planning

UKRI-5351 Large Vacuum chamber for Vulcan 20-20 Target Area-1

UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)

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

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Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05dc72

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Scope

Reference

UKRI-5351

Description

The Central Laser Facility (CLF) is developing a new high-power laser system, Vulcan 20-20, to support cutting-edge research in fundamental physics. The facility will enable experiments simulating extreme astrophysical conditions, particle acceleration, radiation generation, and fusion energy research.

These experiments will take place within a custom-built vacuum chamber designed to support high-power, high-energy laser interactions under controlled conditions. The chamber must meet stringent vacuum, structural, and safety requirements to ensure reliable and safe operation.

Total value (estimated)

- £1,500,000 excluding VAT
- £1,800,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 15 May 2026 to 16 October 2027
- 1 year, 5 months, 2 days

Main procurement category

Goods

CPV classifications

- 38000000 - Laboratory, optical and precision equipments (excl. glasses)
- 42124320 - Parts of vacuum pumps

Contract locations

- UKJ14 - Oxfordshire

Engagement

Engagement deadline

28 November 2025

Engagement process description

UKRI-STFC will be holding individual Supplier Engagement Sessions at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) in Oxfordshire on the week commencing 24th November 2026. The session will last no more than 2 hours and a maximum of two attendees from each supplier organisation to register for the session. The sessions will start at either 10am UK Time or 2pm UK Time. UKRI-STFC is flexible on having a meeting online or meeting onsite at RAL. If you are planning to be onsite arrival time to be 9:30am for 10 AM meeting and 1:30pm for 2:00 PM meeting.

The purpose of these discussions is to gain a clearer understanding of supplier capabilities, potential technical approaches, indicative costs, and any challenges or opportunities that could inform the final specification and tender documentation. The same information will be given to all suppliers who attend a session.

To book onto the Supplier Engagement Session, please submit the names, email addresses, contact phone numbers, whether your preference is online or in person and vehicle registrations (if attending onsite) to the following email address: STFCprocurement@ukri.org, with the subject in the email being UKRI-5351 Vacuum chamber for Vulcan 20-20 Target Area-1-Supplier Engagement Session

Please can you also confirm a preferred date and time on the week of 24th November, and we will try and accommodate. Please confirm your attendance no later than 12pm (noon) on Friday 21st November. If you are planning to attend the meeting onsite you should bring photo ID with you to RAL otherwise you may not be allowed on site. The full address is; Science and Technology Facilities Council, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Harwell Campus, Didcot, OX11 0QX.

If you would like to review an overview of the project before registering for the supplier event to determine whether this requirement is suitable for you, please email stfcprocurement@ukri.org with the subject line: UKRI-5351 Vacuum chamber for Vulcan 20-20 Target Area-1 -Project overview document.”

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

13 February 2026

Contracting authority

UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PDQJ-7126-JDHG

Polaris House

Swindon, Wiltshire

SN2 1FL

United Kingdom

Email: stfcprocurement@ukri.org

Website: <https://www.ukri.org/>

Region: UKK14 - Swindon

Organisation type: Public authority - central government