

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Norfolk Virginia



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RFI-ACT-SACT18-66

This document contains a Request for Information (RFI) Call for Industry and Academia contribution on Autonomy for Decision Support Industry Engagement at the Chief of Transformation Conference (COTC) that will take place in Norfolk, VA on December 12th and 13th, 2018. Suppliers wishing to respond to this RFI should read this document carefully and follow the guidance for responding.

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RFI 18-66

General Information	
Request For Information No.	18-66
Project Title	Call for industry and academia contribution on Autonomy for Decision Support Industry Engagement at the Chiefs Of Transformation Conference (COTC) in Norfolk, VA on December 12 th and 13 th , 2018.
Due date for submission of requested information	October 22nd, 2018
Contracting Office Address	NATO, HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) Purchasing & Contracting Suite 100 7857 Blandy Rd, Norfolk, VA, 23511-2490
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1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary.

HQ Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) announcement in order to facilitate collaboration between the 2018 Chiefs of Transformation Conference (COTC) and industry/academia regarding future technology and use of autonomous systems to support the decision making process. This engagement herein referred to as 2018 COTC “Autonomy for Decision Support Industry Engagement” and further described in Section III, will take place on 12-13 December 2018 in Norfolk, Virginia. The hotel location is still to be confirmed. The 2018 COTC Autonomy for Decision Support Industry Engagement aim is to provide an unthreatening and intimate setting for the Chiefs of Transformation to learn from industry/academia about emerging and future technologies and their likely impact on future military considerations.

1.2 Disclaimer.

This request for information does not constitute a commitment to issue a future request for proposal (RFP). The purpose of this RFI is to involve industry/academia, through collaboration, in the 12-13 December 2018 COTC “Autonomy for Decision Support Industry Engagement”. 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. 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.

RFI respondents would be willing to share their technical knowledge, expertise, and observations with NATO COTC members and other attendees participating in COTC.

2 – GENERAL BACKGROUND:

2.1 Summary of the Chiefs of Transformation Conference

Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) was activated in June 2003 to be “NATO’s forcing agent for change, leading the continuous improvement of Alliance capabilities to uphold NATO’s global security interests.” Since 2006, SACT has hosted an annual Chiefs of Transformation Conference (COTC), held each year in Norfolk, Virginia. December 2018 will mark the thirteenth such gathering of the designated senior military representative (typically at the Flag or General Officer level) from NATO member and partner nations focused on innovation and transformation for the Alliance and their respective nations. The theme of the 2018 event is, “Disruptive Advances Shaping Warfare” and it will seek to interconnect national transformation initiatives with those of ACT, particularly in the areas of innovation, longer-term (five to ten year horizon) capability development, and training. National COTs, along with other senior NATO and partner nation leaders, will be invited to discuss and exchange innovative ideas and best practices while identifying actionable outcomes towards improving interoperability, cooperation and partnership. As in previous years, COTC 18 will seek to include participation from external industry and academia organizations. Unlike previous years, the agenda for COTC 18 will have limited time allocated to large group presentations, and participation by external

organizations will be executed through a booth type presentation during two 90 minute Industry Engagement sessions.

2.2 Framework for Collaboration Interaction Overview

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

3 - DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Background and Expected benefits to respondents

The COTC is an annual forum for invited Chiefs of Transformation and other stakeholders to interact and collaborate with senior leaders from ACT in areas aimed at strengthening the NATO Alliance and improving interoperability. ACT, as the driving agent of transformation for NATO, supports the 2018 COTC. This collaboration with ACT is an opportunity for industry and academia to demonstrate their products and capabilities to senior military leadership from 29 NATO nations and multiple Partner nations. Also, it is expected that the respondents will gain an awareness and knowledge of military thinking in this area. Up to three participants from each organization are welcome to attend the entire conference at no charge.

3.2 Engagement Focus.

The focus of this year's COTC Industry Engagement session (on 13 Dec from 1000 to 1130 and 1300-1430) will be "Autonomy for Decision Support," presented to participants with practical examples and demonstrations in a **Booth Format*** with 3 focus areas:

(1) Data Filtering and Fusing:

- a. How to establish the data sources required to support planning and decision making?
- b. How to improve data filtering to eliminate ambient noise and keep only useful data?
- c. How to store and structure heterogeneous data to allow its exploitation and valuation with a focus on :
 - i. How to cross old and recent data
 - ii. How to avoid data loss, especially during a hand-over phase
 - iii. How to facilitate data access for authorized users
 - iv. How to fuse data of different size and format

(2) Visualization: Demonstrate solutions that give meaning to our data in order to enable faster and better decision making processes, to help find ideas or simply to learn how to better visualize our own data.

(3) Predictive Analytics: Demonstrate the ability to cross heterogeneous data in order to detect weak signals, and identify trends and dynamics. To answer and show a decision support system based on predictive analytics that could enable the detection of early warning signs to understand, analyze and anticipate the behavior of an enemy whatever

it may be (individuals, boat, UAS etc...

* There is no preconceived expectation as to what a “booth format” should be. For planning purposes, each participant should plan on an allocation of up to 500 square feet to accommodate their demonstration and up to 30 observers. Specific requirements and any request to exceed that allocation should be provided in the RFI Response Template.

3.4 **Intent/Objectives.**

The intent of this RFI is to call for formal collaboration with industry/academia in order to identify which companies, organizations, and universities wish to contribute to the COTC, and to choose who will eventually contribute, and work on the contents and organization of the engagement with the selected respondents of the RFI.

The objectives of this session of the conference are to:

- Demonstrate in a booth format how autonomous systems can be used in data management to assist in decision support.
- Show to the nations, organizations and observers involved in COTC innovative solutions leveraging technology and enabling decision makers to predict and anticipate where and when adverse events may occur, so they may take pre-emptive action or effectively respond when these events do happen.
- Share knowledge and experiences with the authorities, representatives and potential users of the technology shown. Facilitate the exchange of information among the industry, academia and NATO nations focused on alliance transformation.

3.5 **Expected input from industry/academia.**

Industry/academia will have on hand relevant materials that will bring to life an area of expertise and create a tangible learning environment for our Chiefs of Transformation. In addition to the booth format, selected industry/academia are invited to submit a link to a video showing their technology which will be made available on the COTC app to further educate participants.

4 - REQUESTED INFORMATION

4.1 **Intent.**

The intent of this RFI is to call for formal collaboration with industry and academia in order to demonstrate Autonomy for Decision Support Systems that are being used or tested to assist in transforming raw data into usable information to aide in the decision making process.

4.2 **Answers to the RFI.**

The answers to this RFI should be submitted via email principally by completion of the attached RFI template. Supplemental material may also be submitted by email and must contain information on how the responder plans on contributing to the COTC Autonomy for Decision Support Industry Engagement. References to any existing available materials or documentation that can serve to determine the level of expertise of the responder are welcome. Other than completion of the RFI template, there is no specific format required, so respondents should choose the mode of reply which best demonstrates their products and capabilities. Team arrangements are welcome, provided they are submitted as a single application.

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4.3 **Follow-on.** Post-submission, selected RFI respondents may be contacted to provide detailed information on their proposals.

4.4 **Selection Criteria.** Selection of organizations for participation in this section of the conference will be based upon three specific criteria (all subordinate questions will be weighted equally during the applicant evaluation to account for execution in the limited available space):

- (1) **Time horizon of five to ten years:** all content must demonstrate or articulate capabilities that may not yet be available as envisioned, but that should be obtainable for broad Alliance employment in a five to ten year time horizon. This constraint is consistent with the COTC intent to foster innovation for the future that is traceable to an evolution of the Alliance's current trajectory. Specific responses to the following questions / topics will be used in a decision criteria matrix to restrict participation (if required):
 - i. Is the capability currently employed in an analogous operational environment?
 - ii. If not, what is the timeframe in which the capability is expected to be employed in an analogous operational environment (please explain requisite milestones in that timeline)?
 - iii. Is the capability currently employed, but would have to be repurposed for leverage in an analogous operational environment; what would be the timeframe in which the capability could be employed in an analogous operational environment (please explain requisite milestones in that timeline)?
- (2) **Organizations with a philosophy of innovation:** preference will be given to organizations that can articulate a philosophy of innovation. Specific responses to the following question will be used in a decision criteria matrix to restrict participation (if required):
 - i. Provide documented examples of corporate projects / products that would be perceived as uniquely innovative.
- (3) **Alignment to Autonomy for Decision Support:** as described by the engagement focus areas defined in section 3.2 of this RFI.

4.5 **Handling of Proprietary information.** Proprietary information, if any, should be minimized and clearly marked as such. HQ SACT will treat marked proprietary information with the same due care it treats its own proprietary information and will employ information security best practices to prevent unauthorized disclosures. Please be advised that all submissions become HQ SACT property and will not be returned. Proprietary information will be destroyed in accordance with industry standards and best practices after the COTC event is complete.

4.6 **Questions.** Questions of a technical nature about this RFI announcement shall be submitted by e-mail solely to the above-mentioned POCs (found on page 2). Accordingly, questions in an e-mail shall not contain proprietary and/or classified information. HQ SACT does not guarantee that questions received after 10 October 2018 will be answered. Answers will be posted on the HQ SACT P&C website at: www.act.nato.int/contracting-procurements.

4.7 **Response Date.** 22 October 2018

4.8 **Summary.** **This is a RFI only. The purpose of this RFI is to involve industry/academia, through collaboration, in the 2018 COTC Logistics Autonomous**

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Systems Industry Engagement. It does not create contractual rights or obligation nor does responding to the RFI confer any advantage on future solicitations or RFPS.

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 emphasised that this is a RFI, and not a RFP of any kind.

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