Ministry of Defence

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Methods for the Launch and Recovery (LAR) of Uncrewed Surface Vehicles (USV) and Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles (UUV) from Ships

Date: 09th July 2021

RFI Title: Methods for the Launch and Recovery (LAR) of Uncrewed Surface Vehicles (USV) and Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles (UUV) from Ships

Issue Date: 09 July 2021

Reference: RFI0012

Version: 1.0

Contents

1. Confidentiality

No information included in your response, or in discussions connected to it, will be disclosed to any other party outside of the Ministry of Defence

2. Introduction

This RFI is not a bidding opportunity but a means by which industry can provide information. Any resulting procurement activity will be conducted competitively once the technical evaluation has been completed.

Please note:
This RFI is an information gathering exercise, no further discussions with industry are planned at this stage however any future procurement activity will be advertised in line with public procurement regulations on the Defence Sourcing Portal and Contracts Finder websites.

3. Background

The Royal Navy envisions that Uncrewed Surface Vehicles (USVs) and Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles (UUVs) will be commonplace in the Royal Navy's force mix and will be utilised for a range of military roles. Some of these platforms will likely need to be hosted onboard a ship (both existing and future classes).
The authority wishes to understand what solutions suppliers can provide to permit the physical Launch and Recovery (LAR) of USVs and UUVs from ships. Suppliers are invited to describe the following information on their solution:

- How the solution launches and recovers uncrewed platforms?
- Key strengths of the solution.
- What level of technical maturity the solution is at and if the solution has been deployed or tested previously?
- What size (mass and physical extents) of uncrewed platform can be launched and recovered using the solution? Are there any other uncrewed platform limitations imposed by this solution?
- What ship speed range can the solution operate at?
- What sea state range can the solution operate at (using the World Meteorological Organization sea state code)?
- What is the unit price of the solution and please give a ROM estimate of installation cost?
- What design codes or other third-party assurance is the solution compliant with?
- Would the solution be suitable for LAR of an optionally manned UxV with persons onboard?
- Any other information pertinent to understanding the limitations of the solution.

The authority is keen to understand the scope and complexity of any physical installation of a solution.

The authority wishes to understand LAR solutions for current vessels as well as future vessels. It should be noted that the scope to modify and alter existing vessels may be limited, and it is requested therefore that suppliers highlight in their submission where such a modification would be needed.

Suppliers are invited to highlight any critical interfaces within their solution, that if the authority released or developed, could decrease the integration challenge, or increase the speed of delivery.

Suppliers are invited to articulate the role they believe they would take in capability development, i.e. are you a prime with a product or products looking to take a leading integration function or a supplier looking to offer a niche capability not serviced by boarder systems.

Suppliers are invited to use Annex A of this RFI as guidance for the information to include in your response.

This is very much an output-based requirement and any innovative suggestion that achieves the result will be welcome.

4. Purpose of the RFI

This RFI aims to achieve 4 outcomes:

a) Align the MOD requirement with industry capability and processes for procurement of the required solution.
b) Develop a procurement strategy that will deliver best value for money for Defence.
c) Implement an enduring solution that allows the Authority to plan its activity against an assured continuity of service, whilst also supporting ad-hoc, unprogrammed surges in demand.
d) To inform a Procurement Strategy that enables the implementation of an enduring solution.

5. RFI Procedure

Responses are requested to be no more than 8 pages. Returns to all the questions are not required, if either not appropriate to the solution being offered, or if the information is unknown.

Responses to this RFI will be reviewed by subject matter experts from different functional areas within Navy Command Headquarters.

Any details provided in response to this RFI will be used for information purposes only and will not be used to determine the potential Suppliers who will be invited to bid, should the Authority proceed to tender.

The results and analysis of this RFI shall not constitute any form of pre-qualification exercise.

Any formal procurement process will be undertaken in accordance with relevant Procurement Law.

Nothing in this RFI, or any other engagements with Industry prior to a formal procurement process, shall be construed as a representation as to the Authority's ultimate decision in relation to the future requirement.

6. How to deliver responses to this RFI

Suppliers are free to respond to this RFI in whatever format conveys the responses in a clear and concise manner; however, it is requested that any responses relating to mapping product capabilities for USV Launch and Recovery viability against each warship class is provided in table format.

Respondents are requested not to submit additional documents such as company overviews, the purpose of the RFI is to collect information related to the technical solution, any additional documents will not be included in the review process.

All submissions are requested electronically to the e-mail address shown below no later than 12.00pm on 23rd August 2021.

Responses will be acknowledged electronically by return e-mail.

7. Confidentiality & Proprietary Information

No information included in your response, or in discussions connected to it, will be disclosed to any other third party.

Proprietary information, where included, should be kept to minimum and must be clearly marked.

8. Costs of preparing your RFI response

Any costs relating to the preparation and submission of a response to this RFI are the sole responsibility of the respondent.

9. Contacts

Quoting the RFI reference, please submit

i) any requests for clarification
ii) all responses to this RFI and
iii) any questions regarding Classification of document(s) intended for submission, to:

NAVYCOMRCL-RFI@mod.gov.uk

10. Annex A

RFI0012 – Methods for the Launch and Recovery (LAR) of Uncrewed Surface Vehicles (USV) and Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles (UUV) from Ships

Required:	
Company Name	
Company Address	
Is the company a Small - Medium Enterprise (less than 250 employees)?	
Name of Company representative completing the RFI	
Contact details (e-mail and telephone number)	
Company web site address	
Main products/services/line of business	
Main market sector	
Number of years in this market sector	

RESPONSE:

1. **Current Technical Solution:**

Note: We recommend a response of up to 8 pages. Figures and annexes can be included as appropriate. If the supplier has multiple solutions which are within scope of this RFI it is requested that these are clearly differentiated.

Overall description of solution:

How the solution launches and recovers uncrewed platforms:

Key strengths of the solution:

What level of technical maturity the solution is at and if the solution has been deployed or tested previously?

What size (mass and physical extents) of uncrewed platform can be launched and recovered using the solution? Are there any other limitations on the uncrewed platform imposed by this solution?

What ship speed range can the solution operate at?

What sea state range can the solution operate at (using the World Meteorological Organization sea state code)?

Scope and complexity of any physical installation of the solution and corresponding utility to existing platforms:

Critical interfaces of the solution:

Unit price of the solution and ROM estimate of installation cost:

What design codes or other third-party assurance is the solution compliant with?

Would the solution be suitable for LAR of an optionally manned UxV with persons onboard?

Any other information pertinent to understanding the limitations of the solution:

Link to product catalogue (if applicable):

2. Technical solution(s) which could be available within the next 24 months:

Please Indicate:

Overall description of solution:

How the solution launches and recovers uncrewed platforms?

Key strengths of the solution:

What level of technical maturity the solution is at and if the solution has been deployed or tested previously?

What size (mass and physical extents) of uncrewed platform can be launched and recovered using the solution? Are there any other limitations on the uncrewed platform imposed by this solution?

What ship speed range can the solution operate at?

What sea state range can the solution operate at (using the World Meteorological Organization sea state code)?

Scope and complexity of any physical installation of the solution and corresponding utility to existing platforms:

Critical interfaces of the solution:

Unit price of the solution and ROM estimate of installation cost:

What design codes or other third-party assurance is the solution compliant with?

Would the solution be suitable for LAR of an optionally manned UxV with persons onboard?

Any other information pertinent to understanding the limitations of the solution:

Link to product catalogue (if applicable):

Innovative solutions are most welcome, even if they do not meet all of the indicative requirements.