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AUKUS MARITIME INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2025

CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

Eligibility

Q: Which types of organisations can submit into the AUKUS Maritime Innovation Challenge 2025?

A: There are no restrictions on organisations that can submit into Stage 1 of the challenge.

Large organisations, small organisations and academic organisations are all permitted to take part. Collaborations are also possible between organisations. We do ask that there is one lead partner with whom any resultant contract will be made, and they subcontract any work undertaken by the other parties.

Although there is no absolute restriction on the nationality of organisations it is a requirement of the competition that respondents are in a position to supply their technology to any of the 3 AUKUS nations.

For Stage 2 participation is by invitation only. You will receive notification by 26 May 2025 if you have been selected to participate in Stage 2. Uninvited proposals will not be accepted.

Q: What costs can I cover in my submission?

A: You can cover costs directly related to delivery of the work described in your project. This includes

ELIGIBLE COSTS	INELIGIBLE COSTS
Wages and labour costs	Gifts
Sub contracting costs	Finance agreement interest or charges
Business premises rentals	Costs associated with securing intellectual property arising from or associated with this project.
Overheads (including insurance of goods in transit for demonstration and depreciation of equipment owned by the respondent)	Payments for work undertaken which is a statutory requirement
Consumable items	Payments for legal challenges
Capital items (please note that the contracting bodies may maintain ownership of large capital items)	Liabilities incurred before the commencement of any awarded contract

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Q: Do I need to have had prior experience working with any of the AUKUS navies?

A: Previous engagement with the navies is not required to take part in this competition. We are keen to receive submissions from as wide an audience as possible. It may be useful for you to reach out to your local organisation (ASCA, DASA, DIU) to discuss if you are less familiar with working within defence.

Submission

Q: Can we submit more than 1 idea into the Challenge?

A: Yes, you can make as many submissions as you like. However, all submissions must be completely self contained. It is not permissible to enter a submission that can only be completed upon acceptance of another bid. You should also bear in mind your resourcing should more than one of your submissions be successful; do you have the facilities/staff to successfully deliver all submissions in the required timeframe.

Q: Can previous unsuccessful ASCA/DASA/DIU applications be resubmitted into this challenge?

A: If you have an idea that meets the scope of this challenge then you can submit into one of the portals. If the idea is based on a proposal that has been declined in the past you should consider any feedback you received and ensure that you have addressed any points raised. However, addressing those points would not in itself guarantee success in this challenge.

Q: Can I submit into all of the submission portals?

A: All submissions received into any of the portals will be reviewed by all nations. There is no need to submit into more than one portal. The assessment process at Stage 1 is the same irrespective of the submission portal used.

Information Sharing

Q: How do you protect the Intellectual Property (IP) of the project when sharing across international boundaries through AUKUS?

A: Any IP generated by an organisation under a contract will remain the property of the organisation. The funding nation will secure certain rights to use the information for Government/Defence purposes which will allow information to be shared across the AUKUS nations.

Contracting

Q: Will I have to agree to separate contracts from each nation if I am successful?

A: Respondents invited to take part in Stage 2 will submit their proposal into one of the nations' portals. This will be advised to the respondent when invited. There will only be one



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contract which will be between the respondent and the nation selected to receive the proposal.

Q: If my proposal is not successful at Stage 2 will it be made available to other nations/defence agencies for funding consideration?

A: No. Information sharing agreements in place do not allow wider circulation of proposals to explore other funding mechanisms.

Technical

Q: Do you require proposals to cover Command and Control and decision support tools as part of this call, or are you just interested in underwater communications?

A: Overall, the AUKUS allies are seeking to fund innovations to de-risk each of the Desired Capability Effects, and each requirement of the mission. For any one of the AUKUS nations this may be in the form of one proposal answering the entire problem statement, or multiple proposals answering complementary aspects of the problem statement.

Q: The competition document states: “This mission will need to be communicated to individual Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles with varied capabilities and payloads, over an appropriate range.” What are these capabilities and payloads?

A: In operations, UVs may be equipped with a variety of sensors or effectors to complete tasks safely and effectively. The technologies we are seeking to fund through this competition are independent enablers of the task(s) that those sensors or effectors are designed to do. Any innovation we receive in this competition should be general enough that criteria describing the strengths and weaknesses of any node in the networked team can be inputted by an end-user. A competitive mission planning algorithm or C2/C3 system is one in which the end-user can adapt it to any task, regardless of environment, threat level, rules of engagement, or other considerations.

Q: Is a proposal which addresses more than one of the Desired Capability Effects more likely to be funded than one which only addresses a single effect?

A: All submissions will be assessed on their desirability and feasibility. If your organisation can offer an innovative solution – and leap forward in performance – for part of the mission requirements, then this will still be considered by assessors.

What the AUKUS allies are ultimately seeking is a more capable teamed network of UVs, improved freedom of action for operational commanders, and value for money for taxpayers. If your proposal can contribute to those goals in a novel and credible way, it will stand a good chance of receiving funding.

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Q: The competition document mentions a Standing NATO Agreement (STANAG) on the interoperability of UUVs and C2/C3 systems from different suppliers and nations. How can someone unfamiliar with Defence and NATO standards understand what this means in practice?

A: NATO STANAG 4817 is an interface standard document. It is still in production but will have a number of Volumes relating to different Control layers. The Layer relating to Interfaces between Control System and Vehicle will be a derivation of the [CATL standard](#). Draft copies of the full standard, including automated code generation tools, should be available shortly.

Exploitation

Q: If my proposal is successful how will it be demonstrated to end-users?

A: When successful proposals are on contract there will be opportunities to engage with and seek feedback from serving members of the AUKUS armed forces with expertise in underwater warfare and military command, control, and communications (C3).

When projects have completed in November 2026 they will be demonstrated at a multinational maritime exercise.

Q: What do I need to know about participating in a military exercise?

A: If you are successful at Stage 2 of this competition, your project manager and technical partner will assist you with applying to participate in a suitable multinational maritime exercise through the relevant process. Their support and guidance will help you complete relevant paperwork on time, and help ascertain what government provided equipment and information you may need to contribute to the exercise.

ASCA, DASA, and DIU can't guarantee that any particular platform or system – in service or in development – will be participating in the exercise. We will help you plan for if the optimal platform or system required to demonstrate your innovation cannot be used.

Q: Are innovators expected to pay to attend this multinational maritime exercise?

A: If you are invited to bid in for Stage 2 of the competition you will be required to include costs for participating in the multinational maritime exercise in November 2026. These costs

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will have to include shipping of any necessary hardware to the location of the exercise. Additional information will be provided if you are invited to bid into Stage 2.

ASCA, DASA, and DIU recommend innovators check how long it will take to obtain export licenses for their innovation if those are required.

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