

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Autonomous Aerial Vehicle for Open Sea Search and Rescue Operations

Department of the Ocean Force (DOF)

RFP DOF/AAV/2023-24

Issue Date: July 15, 2023

Proposal Deadline: August 30, 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Ocean Force (DOF) invites qualified organizations to submit proposals for the development of an autonomous aerial vehicle capable of performing open sea search and rescue operations. The need for such an innovation has become critical due to increasing incidents of DOF members falling into the open ocean, coupled with difficulties in timely and effective rescue, a task complicated by vast search areas and unpredictable oceanic conditions.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND TIMELINES

The need for an autonomous aerial vehicle arises from the challenges associated with rescuing personnel in open water, under potentially harsh weather conditions with wind speeds reaching up to 100 miles per hour. The survival window for such incidents is approximately 4 hours, emphasizing the urgent need for an effective solution.

The DOF expects a prototype within a year for open sea testing, with full production readiness anticipated within two years.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Proposals will be assessed on the following factors:
- System Loitering Time: Ability to maintain effective operational status over extended periods.
- System Speeds and Search Swath: Speed of the vehicle and area coverage capabilities.
- Survivability: Durability in harsh weather conditions.
- High Confidence Detection Rates: Accuracy in locating individuals in open water.
- Past Performance: Previous success in similar or related projects.
- Program Management Structure: Effectiveness of proposed project management methodologies.
- Multi-module Sensors: Incorporation of versatile, multi-faceted sensor technology.
- System Deployment Agility: Response time and adaptability to a range of environmental conditions.

Each evaluation factor will carry equal weight in the overall assessment of proposals.

4. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submissions should include detailed responses to each evaluation criterion, and must highlight the organization's capability to meet the DOF's requirements. Proposals should be concise, clear, and comprehensive, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the DOF's needs.

5. COST

The DOF reserves the right to award contracts to multiple organizations, a single organization, or none, based on the proposals received. The DOF will select a proposal that best addresses the problem statement, regardless of the cost. The DOF is under no obligation to award contracts to the lowest bidder.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries and submission of proposals, please contact:

[Contact Name] [Position] Department of the Ocean Force (DOF) [Email Address] [Phone Number]

7. CLOSING DATE

All proposals must be received by 5:00 PM (EST) on August 30, 2023. Any submissions after this deadline will not be considered.

The DOF looks forward to your innovative solutions to this vital operational challenge.

8. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DATA RIGHTS

The Department of the Ocean Force (DOF) shall retain Government Purpose Rights to all data and intellectual property produced, developed, or otherwise generated in the execution of the contract resulting from this RFP. The Contractor agrees to grant to the DOF a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide license to use, modify, reproduce, release, perform, display, or disclose such data and intellectual property for any governmental purposes.

This includes, but is not limited to, the rights to: (1) use, duplicate, or disclose the data in any manner and for any purpose whatsoever, and to have or permit others to do so; (2) use, modify, reproduce, release, perform, display, or disclose data for commercial purposes or in the execution of a contract or subcontract at any tier, or to authorize others to do so.

The Contractor will ensure that all agreements with subcontractors, suppliers, or team members include appropriate provisions to ensure that the DOF's rights to use, modify, reproduce, release, perform,

display, or disclose the data for any governmental purpose are preserved and protected as described above.

9. ANTICIPATED REVIEWS

The DOF anticipates several reviews throughout the course of this project to ensure proper adherence to the set timeline and to monitor progress. These will include:

- System Requirements Review (SRR)
- Preliminary Design Review (PDR)
- Critical Design Review (CDR)
- Production Readiness Review (PRR)

Further information about the expectations for these reviews, their exact timelines, and the manner in which they will be conducted will be communicated upon contract award.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Bidders must provide a detailed Quality Assurance (QA) plan outlining how they intend to maintain and ensure high quality throughout the project's lifecycle. The QA plan should include, but not be limited to:

- Measures for detecting and mitigating potential risks and issues during development.
- Processes for regularly testing and validating system functionality and performance.
- Procedures for incorporating feedback from DOF into iterative development cycles.
- Techniques for ensuring the product meets all DOF specifications and requirements, as outlined in this RFP.

The selected Contractor will be expected to comply with the agreed-upon QA plan throughout the contract period, and the DOF reserves the right to review and approve this plan prior to contract award.

11. REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION

Regular and clear communication is crucial for the success of this project. As such, bidders must propose a comprehensive plan outlining their approach to project updates and ongoing communication with the DOF. This plan should include, but not be limited to:

- The format and frequency of project updates.
- The designated points of contact on the Contractor's side.
- Methods for issue escalation and resolution.
- A communication strategy for key project milestones and reviews, including SRR, PDR, CDR, and PRR.

The DOF expects transparency and timely communication from the selected Contractor, and reserves the right to adjust the communication plan as necessary to ensure the successful execution of the project.

12. LEGAL AND CONTRACTING DETAILS

12.1 Legal Compliance

The selected Contractor must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations in the performance of the contract. Any violation of such laws, ordinances, or regulations shall constitute a breach of contract.

12.2 Contract Agreement

The Contractor shall enter into a formal contract agreement with the DOF. This agreement will specify the rights, duties, and obligations of both parties, including, but not limited to, scope of work, deliverables, timelines, payment schedules, and other pertinent details.

12.3 Confidentiality

The Contractor shall treat all information provided by the DOF as confidential. Any information acquired by the Contractor during the course of the contract shall not be disclosed to any third party without the express written consent of the DOF.

12.4 Indemnification

The Contractor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the DOF, its officers, agents, and employees from any claims, damages, and actions of any kind or nature, whether at law or in equity, arising from or caused by any services of any kind or nature furnished by the Contractor, provided that such liability is not attributable to negligence on the part of the DOF.

12.5 Termination

The DOF reserves the right to terminate the contract at any point, with or without cause, provided that the Contractor is given due notice of such termination. The specific conditions and procedures for contract termination will be outlined in the contract agreement.

12.6 Amendments

No amendment or variation of the terms of the contract shall be valid unless it is made in writing and signed by the parties. The terms and conditions of the contract can only be altered with the prior approval of the DOF.

End of RFP DOF/AAV/2023-24