

## Notification of Intent to Invite Proposals

*Method: Best Value Competitive Dialogue*

### Support to Protected Business Network (PBN) Capability Programme Implementation – Project 0, Discover and Accelerate

**NCIA Reference #: RFP-CO-424219-PBN\_0**

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**Estimated Amount:** Up to 200,000,000 EUR

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**NOI Closing Date:** 26 February 2025

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**Solicitation Release Date:** Estimated on 7 March 2025

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**Solicitation Closing Date:** Estimated on 17 March 2026

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**Contract Award Date:** Estimated on 1 May 2026

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**Competition Type:** Best Value Competitive Dialogue

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The NCIA hereby notifies the NATO Nations of its intent to solicit submission of competitive proposals for the provision of contracted support services to implement the Protected Business Network (PBN) Capability Programme.

This competitive process supports the initial PBN Project 0 (Discover and Accelerate) aimed at selecting the top qualified and experienced industry leader that will assume the role of Service Integrator supporting the implementation of the whole capability.

Based on the above, the NCIA is seeking to enter into a framework contract with the Service Integrator selected as a result of the competitive process. The framework contract will be including reference prices for any support the Integrator will provide in respect of the entire PBN Capability implementation. A single award is planned.

Prior to releasing the request for proposals to eligible companies and following the conduct of a broad, initial market research; the NCIA is organizing on 19 February 2025 an informative session (hybrid onsite/remote event) addressing NCIA's vision on PBN and the basis of the NATO Cloud Enterprise View. Joining instructions will be available from 10 January 2025 on the NCIA website.

#### **NCIA Point of Contact**

Mr. Giordano Mastrocinque, Senior Contracting Officer

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#### **Annexes:**

- A. Summary of Requirements
- B. Distribution List

**\*\*Neo eProcurement Registration\*\***

*Attention Suppliers,*

*The NCIA is stepping into a new era of procurement. We have launched an eProcurement tool, Neo, to make our collaborations smoother, faster, and more transparent. If you are keen to do business with us, you will need to register in [Neo](#). This tool will offer suppliers visibility into past, current and upcoming business opportunities, and streamlines the competition cycles, contract awards, and account management.*

**To** : Distribution List

**Subject** : **Notification of Intent to Invite Proposals for the Support to Protected Business Network (PBN) Capability Programme Implementation – Project 0, Discover and Accelerate**

**References** : A. AC/4-D/2261 (1996 Edition), NSIP Procedures for International Competitive Bidding  
B. AC/4-D(2008)0002-REV2, Investment Committee for Procedures and Practices for Conducting NSIP International Competitive Bidding Using Best Value Evaluation Methodology  
C. AC/4(PP)D/28701-ADD1  
D. AC/4-DS(2024)0039

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1. In accordance with References A. to D., the NCIA, as the Host Nation responsible to implement the project in subject, hereby gives notice of its intent to solicit submission of competitive proposals for the provision of contracted support to Protected Business Network (PBN) Capability Programme Implementation – Project 0 (Discover and Accelerate), hereinafter referred to as the "Project".
  2. A high-level summary of the Project's technical requirements is set forth in Annex A hereto. These requirements are being refined and will be included in further details as part of the solicitation documents.
  3. The reference for this Project is RFP-CO-424219-PBN\_0, and all correspondence concerning this NOI and subsequent ICB should reference this number.
  4. The NCIA request for proposals will adopt a best value competitive dialogue evaluation methodology consistently with the authorization received by NCIA per Reference D, to deviate from the standard competition process per References A and B. An outline of each of the sequential four evaluation steps that will be addressed in the request for proposals is provided below:
    - **Step 1, Pre-Qualifications and Competitive Range Establishment:** Down-selection of up to 5 companies;
    - **Step 2, Enhanced Proposal Submission and Work-Package Evaluation:** Starting from the down-selected companies identified with Step 1; further down-selection of up to 3 companies. These will be awarded a contract for not-to-exceed (NTE) MEUR 2.5 to develop a demonstrator that will be used for evaluation purposes;
    - **Step 3, Focused Competitive Dialogue and Demonstrator Assessment:** Evaluation of the demonstrators and competitive dialogue with the down-selected companies resulting from Step 2. This Step aims at clarifying areas that can be improved to maximize compliance with the overall requirements hence to inform final (revised) proposals submission at Step 4;
    - **Step 4, Revised Proposals assessment and Final Selection:** Selection of the sole winning company (Industry Service Integrator).

5. The Industry Service Integrator will be awarded a framework contract listing the reference prices for any service the Integrator will provide to implement and operate the PBN Capability. It is envisaged that this contract will produce business benefits for the Integrator once the subsequent Projects 1 and 2 (outlined at Annex A) foreseen in the capability implementation plan will be formally approved by the relevant NATO Authorities. Therefore, and with no commitments from NATO/NCIA's end; it is estimated, based on the currently available initial assumptions, that the value of the framework contract awarded to the Industry Service Integrator may result in a business opportunity of estimated EUR 200,000,000 over an estimated period of 7 years. However, this will depend on the future developments in respect of how the PBN Capability will be implemented through Projects 1 and 2 with the associated delineation of responsibilities between the NCIA and the external contracting partners.
6. Eligibility to participate in the competitive process is declared by national authorities. Hence, qualified and certified companies interested in receiving the request for proposals for this Project are hereby requested to provide a Declaration of Eligibility (DoE), **sent by their Delegation/Mission to NATO** to the NCIA contracting authority not later than **26 February 2025**, which is 48 (forty-eight) calendar days after the date of this letter.
- a. In addition to the certification of the company's security clearances required under this NOI (further details on required security level at Paragraph 11 hereto), the DoE should include the following information for each of the nominated companies:
- Company name
  - Company address
  - Point of Contact (PoC)
  - PoC email address
  - PoC telephone number
- b. This information is critical to enable prompt and accurate communication with prospective bidders and should be sent electronically to: [RFPCO424219PBN@ncia.nato.int](mailto:RFPCO424219PBN@ncia.nato.int).
7. In order to maximize competition the NCIA may, at its discretion, accept nominations after the deadline, so long as the request for proposals has not been issued. The NCIA may even accept, at its discretion, nominations after the request for proposals has been issued under the condition that such late nomination will not be used as the basis to request an extension to the request for proposals closing date.
8. Requests for participation in this competition received directly from individual companies will not be considered.
9. Companies participating to the competition process will be required to declare a proposal validity of 3 (three) months from closing date referred to the 4<sup>th</sup>, final step of the evaluation process (as outlined at paragraph 4. above). Should the selection and award procedure exceed the request for proposals' closing date by more than 1 (one) month, companies will be requested to voluntarily extend the validity of their proposals accordingly. Companies may decline to do so, withdraw their proposal and excuse themselves from the competition process without penalty.



10. National authorities are advised that the request for proposals is anticipated to be NATO UNCLASSIFIED. However, the solicitation package and the contractual documents could contain references to other NATO documents classified up to NATO R3STRICED.
11. The selected company (Industry Service Integrator) resulting from the intended competitive process will be required to handle and store classified information up to the level of NATO S3CRET. In addition, contractor personnel will be required to work unescorted in Class II Security areas. Therefore, access can only be permitted to cleared individuals. Only companies maintaining such cleared facilities and the appropriate personnel clearances will be able to perform the resulting contract.
12. The NCIA reserves the right to cancel, suspend, or withdraw this NOI at its own discretion and at any time. The NCIA is not liable for any expenses incurred by companies in conjunction with their responses to this NOI and such responses shall not be regarded as a commitment of any kind concerning future procurement of the items or services described herein.
13. Your assistance in this procurement is greatly appreciated.

**For the Chief of Acquisition:**

*[Original Signed By]*

Giordano Mastrocinque  
Senior Contracting Officer

## Annex A – Summary of Requirements

Project No. 2024/9IS03211, CPP 9A3101

### 1. Project Background and Objective

The Protected Business Network (PBN) Capability is intended to deliver flexible and adaptable solutions for IT mobility to the NATO Enterprise up to NATO R3STRICTED (NR) and NATO UNCLASSIFIED (NU) levels in support of business processes.

The PBN Vision intends to establish an integrated Enterprise platform for developing a classified digital workplace (up to NR). Challenges associated to the concept of combining NU and NR capabilities and the related access controls and accreditation processes does require partnering with a top industry partner that NCIA intends to identify through a competitive selection process.

Accordingly, the objective of Project 0 is to select a single industry partner (Service Industry Integrator) to which the NCIA will entrust the follow-on implementation of the subsequent projects (Project 1 – Implement and Scale; Project 2 – Community of Interest (COI) Migration) in order to achieve the full PBN capability implementation. Hence, through competition, Project 0 will examine and assess acquisition options as proposed by industry. Indeed, the aim of the Project is to engage industry to demonstrate viable technical designs, operating models and transition plans to implement the entire PBN capability through the subsequent Projects 1 and 2 (as named above).

### 2. Scope of Work

Project #0 is a critical foundational project aimed at delivering well-defined processes and methodologies to guide the successful execution of subsequent PBN Project #1 and Project #2. This phase involves the development of proof-of-concepts and pilot initiatives, which will serve as key benchmarks and reference points for the larger implementation effort. By establishing these baseline standards, the project seeks to ensure consistency, scalability, and alignment with the overarching objectives of the PBN program.

As part of this effort, the Industry Service Integrator will be required to develop a comprehensive and detailed methodology for each of the Work Packages outlined below. This includes articulating clear objectives, defining structured processes, roles and responsibilities and proposing innovative approaches tailored to address the unique challenges and requirements of each package. Furthermore, the Industry Service Integrator must demonstrate the technical and operational feasibility of these methodologies during the demonstration phase (Work Package 5), ensuring that the proposed solutions are practical, effective, and aligned with project goals.

By accomplishing these deliverables, Project #0, Discover and Accelerate, will lay the groundwork for a robust and streamlined implementation of the subsequent PBN projects, fostering a framework of excellence and continuous improvement.

#### **Work Package 0: NATO Enterprise Cloud Operating Model (NECOM) operationalization.**

The NATO Enterprise Cloud Operating Model (NECOM) is an operating model designed to ensure the secure and efficient management of NATO's cloud services. This work package requires the Industry Service Integrator to propose how to operationalize the NECOM. This involves developing

methodologies and processes aligned with NATO's security and operational standards to govern interactions between the different components of the NECOM. Additionally, the Service Industry Integrator will propose tools that facilitate these processes, ensuring efficient management of the cloud environments and seamless communication between all stakeholders.

### **Work Package 1: Cloud Transformation Management.**

The Industry Service Integrator will propose a definition of the Cloud Transformation Function, a critical component of the NATO Enterprise Cloud Operating Model (NECOM). This definition will encompass a comprehensive outline of each proposed role and its associated responsibilities, which will include, but are not limited to, planning, coordinating, monitoring, and overseeing the execution of transformational activities.

The implementation of this function will necessitate the adoption of robust program and project management methodologies, proactive risk management strategies, and continuous engagement with all stakeholders to ensure alignment and transparency. Additionally, the package will incorporate a tailored suite of tools designed to facilitate these practices, ensuring efficiency, scalability, and adaptability throughout the transformation process.

This structured approach will enable the Cloud Transformation Function to effectively drive the successful realization of NECOM's objectives while maintaining the standards of governance and operational excellence.

### **Work Package 2: AS-IS Assessment.**

The Industry Service Integrator, in partnership with the NCIA, will design and present a robust methodology for assessing NATO's current IT landscape (NU/NR), including infrastructure, applications, and operational processes. Utilizing data and information provided by NCIA, the proposed discovery approach will deliver a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the existing IT environment, identifying critical components and evaluating the cloud readiness of current workloads.

This assessment framework will incorporate cloud migration best practices, such as workload prioritization, security and compliance considerations, and scalability planning. The methodology will also emphasize collaboration with stakeholders to address interoperability challenges and align with NATO's operational requirements.

As part of the Work Package 5: Demonstrator, the proposed approach will undergo validation through a practical demonstration to confirm its feasibility, effectiveness, and alignment with project objectives. The insights gained from this exercise will establish a foundational baseline to guide NATO's strategic IT transformation. This baseline will facilitate a smooth and secure transition to cloud-based operations, enabling enhanced agility, resilience, and scalability in support of NATO's mission objectives.

### **Work Package 3: TO-BE Definition.**

This work package entails defining the target state of the NATO Cloud Enterprise View<sup>1</sup>. In close collaboration with NCIA, in particular with the CTO - Cloud Centre of Excellence (CCoE) component as part of NECOM, the Industry Service Integrator will design the future-state architecture, processes, and governance frameworks. These efforts will be guided by the CCoE within the NECOM model, encompassing key domains such as Cloud Applications, Cloud Operations, Foundations, Corporate Network Access, Service Management and Control, Cyber Security, and Identity and Access Management.

The design will align with existing NATO policies, directives, and operational requirements, ensuring consistency, compliance, and readiness to meet the strategic objectives of the NATO Enterprise Cloud initiative.

### **Work Package 4: Recommended Outsourcing Schema.**

The Service Industry Integrator will recommend an outsourcing schema based on the proposed model, including best of breed companies to perform the PBN services.

The Industry Service Integrator will develop and present a comprehensive outsourcing schema aligned with the proposed model, ensuring optimal delivery of NATO Cloud Enterprise services. This schema will include detailed recommendations for the selection and engagement of best-in-class companies, identified for their proven expertise, capabilities, and alignment with NATO's strategic objectives.

By leveraging a diverse pool of companies, the recommended approach should promote innovation, cost-efficiency, and adaptability in delivering PBN services. Furthermore, this outsourcing strategy will include risk management protocols, performance monitoring frameworks, and continuous improvement initiatives to ensure sustained alignment with NATO's evolving needs and priorities.

### **Work Package 5: Demonstrator.**

This work package encompasses the development of a demonstrator by the Industry Service Integrator, followed by test validation and assessment conducted by the NCIA based on NCIA pre-defined scenarios. The demonstrator will be built upon the foundations established in the preceding work packages and must fully align with the defined TO-BE state. The solution will reflect the services that the Integrator will support upon the award of the framework contract, including but not limited to IaaS/PaaS Landing Zones, Digital Workplace, and Cloud Platform Engineering.

The purpose of this work package is to provide critical insights into the feasibility, performance, and scalability of the proposed cloud-based solutions. These findings will facilitate the identification of any necessary adjustments, which can be addressed through competitive dialogue during the ongoing procurement process. This iterative approach ensures that any refinements are made prior to full-scale implementation, thereby optimizing the final solution to meet NATO's strategic and operational requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> The NATO Enterprise Cloud View showcases the foundational and supporting services necessary for managing a secure and scalable cloud environment.



This Work Package will consist of:

- **Application Transformation and Cloud Service Management:** the Industry Service Integrator will demonstrate the established frameworks to transform selected applications for the cloud and manage these services within the NATO Enterprise Cloud environment. This process will involve end-to-end testing, from the initial transformation of applications to their ongoing management within the NECOM framework.
- **Proving Accreditation Feasibility:** the Industry Service Integrator will demonstrate exercises (based on NCIA developed scenarios) that validate the feasibility of accrediting cloud services and applications by applying the continuous risk assessment and automated compliance audit. These exercises will simulate the accreditation process, ensuring that the transformed applications and new services meet all necessary security and compliance standards.
- **Proving Operating Model Feasibility:** the Industry Service Integrator will validate the operating models developed in previous work packages by prototyping them in a controlled environment. This will involve deploying the models in pilot operations to assess their performance in a live setting. The Industry Service Integrator will evaluate how effectively these models support the day-to-day management of cloud services and make necessary adjustments to ensure they are scalable and sustainable for full deployment in NATO's production environment.

### 3. Anticipated timeline

Considering the entire PBN Capability Implementation has been given the highest priority by the two NATO Strategic Commands, the below provided indicative timeline developed by NCIA for Project #0 is very aggressive. It does require industry to respond and deliver at the speed of relevance and it may be further compressed. Accordingly, NCIA anticipates that requests for extensions might be considered only subject to submission of strong, valid justifications. The NCIA will not allow extensions and/or questions that are clearly intended to delay the acquisition timeline for this critical project (for example, questions for which an answer is already available in the competition documents).

Industry Day (informative session)	19/2/2025
RFP Step-1 Issued/Distributed	7/3/2025
RFP Step-1 (Paper-Based) closing date	18/4/2025
RFP Step-1 (Paper-Based) Step-1 Down-Selection Evaluation Completed	3/5/2025
RFP Step-2 Issued/Distributed	31/5/2025
RFP Step-2 (Paper-Based + PPT) closing date	24/6/2025
RFP Step-2 (Paper-Based) Down-Selection Evaluation Completed	15/7/2025
NTE MEUR 2.5 contract award to each of the up to 3 down-selected firms (Demonstrators)	2/9/2025
RFP Step-3 (Technical/Demonstrator) closing date for submission by Demonstrators	1/11/2025

Competitive Dialogue and Demonstrators Assessment	3/3/2026
Final Price Proposals preparation by the technically compliant Demonstrator(s)	17/3/2026
Final Price Proposal(s) assessment	24/3/2026
Contract award to Industry Service Integrator	1/5/2026

#### 4. Period of Performance

Upon final selection and award of the framework contract to the Industry Service Integrator; the required support to implement the PBN capability (through Projects 1 and 2) is anticipated to start in Q2 2026 with an estimated end date in Q4 2029. It is important to note that this timeline represents the anticipated duration of the entire PBN Capability implementation and adjustments may be made depending on subsequent submissions to the relevant NATO authorities of Projects 1 and 2 for funding and authorizations.