

## **Request for Information (RFI)**

### **Innovation Challenge: How Can the Department of Defense Better Contract with Industry for Software Development Solutions?**

The Department of Defense (DoD) runs on software. Every DoD mission, major system acquisition, and technology modernization effort is software intensive. Effective, timely software is critical to enabling future DoD capabilities to dominate future conflicts. The DoD and military services recognize that to deliver such capabilities, the DoD needs contract structures that enable flexibility. This requires improving how the DoD harnesses commercial software development expertise, capabilities, and platforms.

DISA is partnering with the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense Acquisition & Sustainment (OUSD A&S) Acquisition Enablers Software Pathway team and United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to gather innovative industry ideas. To inform future software development acquisitions, the DoD wants industry inputs and ideas to improve contracting for software solutions. These can be informed by industry best practices and examples of successful execution.

**The DoD seeks your feedback on effective and innovative ways for the DoD to better contract for software development solutions. The Department values your input on contracting techniques that enable the DoD to be a better partner.**

#### **Background**

DoD has made a strong pivot over the last few years to transition to modern software development practices of Agile, Lean, and DevSecOps. These are now the default approaches to develop software in the DoD, as driven by software modernization strategies, acquisition and CIO leadership direction, statute, and policy. The [Software Acquisition Pathway](#), governed by DoDI 5000.87, enables the DoD to acquire custom software capabilities under the [Adaptive Acquisition Framework](#).

The DoD is also moving to better leverage “software factory” enterprise platforms and services allowing programs to focus on key functionality instead of duplicating the full tech stack. This requires transforming many of the DoD’s processes, policies, and culture to embrace the new paradigm. As industry has led the way, the DoD wants to learn how we can effectively transform our contracting strategies and vehicles to adopt these software practices and grow our National Security Innovation Base.

Feedback gained through this Innovation Challenge RFI will be considered by the Department for developing contracting guidance and shaping key future software acquisitions.

#### **Requested Feedback**

The DoD seeks written feedback on potential **contracting approaches for Agile software development teams and DevSecOps (DSO)-as-a-Service solutions**. Dependent on industry feedback to this RFI, the DoD may follow-up with future engagement opportunities; to include question and answer sessions, one-on-one engagements, roundtables and/or requests for additional written information. The DoD encourages respondents to share their innovative ideas on effective contract structures that could be used by the Department to:

- Select contract types that are best suited for software development and DSO-as-a-Service activities
- Enable flexible and responsive Agile software development and DSO-as-a-Service contracts
- Incentivize high-quality, user-centric, and timely software deliveries
- Successfully measure contract performance

### **Response Guidelines**

Interested parties should respond to this RFI using the **template found at Appendix 1** and focus on the best techniques and examples. To the greatest extent possible, please keep responses to under three pages. Copies of particularly successful contracts and arrangements are also welcome to support responses. Please include the following on response cover pages:

- Company Name and Address
- Company Web Page
- Points of Contact and Contact Information
- Other Corporate Information

Responses are not expected to be comprehensive – they should focus on key recommendations and best practices. Respondents are asked to generalize best practices and approaches for a wide DoD audience.

Responses are due by **1600 CDT on 15 August 2022** to enable the Government to organize findings, please send to:

- Vanessa McCollum, Agreements Officer, [vanessa.a.mccollum.civ@mail.mil](mailto:vanessa.a.mccollum.civ@mail.mil)
- Jeremy Markusic, Agreements Specialist, [Jeremy.d.markusic.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Jeremy.d.markusic.civ@mail.mil)
- Organization Box, [disa.scott.ditco.mbx.pl84-other-transaction-authority@mail.mil](mailto:disa.scott.ditco.mbx.pl84-other-transaction-authority@mail.mil)

### **Additional Discussions**

The Government may choose to reach out to select respondents for additional discussions as a result of this RFI. Such discussions would only be used to obtain additional information as part of market research.

### **Questions**

Questions regarding this RFI shall be submitted in writing by email to the following contacts; the Government does not guarantee that questions received after **24 June 2022** will be answered:

- Vanessa McCollum, Agreements Officer, [vanessa.a.mccollum.civ@mail.mil](mailto:vanessa.a.mccollum.civ@mail.mil)
- Jeremy Markusic, Agreements Specialist, [Jeremy.d.markusic.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Jeremy.d.markusic.civ@mail.mil)
- Organization Box, [disa.scott.ditco.mbx.pl84-other-transaction-authority@mail.mil](mailto:disa.scott.ditco.mbx.pl84-other-transaction-authority@mail.mil)

### **Disclaimer**

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes. This RFI is not a solicitation and is not to be construed as a commitment by the Government to issue a solicitation or ultimately award a contract. Responses will not be considered as proposals, nor will any award be made as a result of this request. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) clause 52.215-3, “Request for Information or Solicitation for Planning Purposes”, is incorporated by reference. The Government does not intend to reimburse respondents for any costs associated with the submissions of their responses to this RFI; respondents to this RFI are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding. Proprietary information and trade secrets, if any, must be clearly marked on all materials. All information received in response to this RFI that is marked “Proprietary” will be handled accordingly. Please be advised that all submissions become Government property and will not be returned nor will receipt be confirmed. In accordance with

FAR 15.201(e), responses to this RFI are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract.

Responses from this RFI will be used to formatively shape broad DoD guidance for acquiring software solutions. Response content may be aggregated and anonymously published into summary documentation to facilitate such guidance. Any publications resulting from this RFI will be non-attributional, and RFI respondents' consent for their responses to be used for such purposes.

## Appendix 1: Response Template

### APPENDIX 1: RESPONSE TEMPLATE

Respondents should provide a response that addresses the following five questions:

#### 1. Examples of Success<sup>1</sup>.

***For examples of successful software development contracts (if applicable) please consider the following:*** What are the characteristics of previous successful software development contracts, including but not limited to: program background, Contract Line-Item Number (CLIN) structures, contract-types, metrics, and incentives?

- a. Did the program's structure include multiple ongoing contracts (e.g., for infrastructure, multiple development teams) – if so, how was that enabled?
- b. What type of Agile and/or DevSecOps methodologies were employed, and how were they contracted for (e.g., product-based, service-based, contract types (fixed-price, time and materials/labor hour, cost-reimbursement)?
- c. What types of incentives were employed that enabled a win-win approach for the awardee and the Government?
- d. What novel approaches were used for evaluating and selecting vendors (e.g., challenges, demonstrations)? What are some examples of criteria and/or scenarios used?
- e. What indicators and metrics were used to assure the effort in question was on track to deliver working capability within the anticipated sprint/iteration?
- f. What DoD or other federal government organizations are you working with that executes software development well, and what specifically are they doing well?

**Bottom Line:** What has worked when contracting for software development solutions?

#### 2. Barriers and Challenges.

- a. What challenges have you encountered when contracting with the DoD for software development solutions?
- b. What are the greatest barriers-to-entry for innovators in this space, and what recommendations do you have for overcoming challenges?
- c. For companies that have not yet partnered with the DoD, what barriers and challenges do you see?

**Bottom Line:** What has not worked when contracting for software development solutions?

#### 3. Innovations.

What innovative ideas and recommendations can you offer with regards to contracting for software development solutions? These may be informed by successful contracting arrangements with commercial entities or other corporate best practices.

**Bottom Line:** What new concepts should the DoD consider when contracting for software development?

---

<sup>1</sup> "Success" means contracts for development activities resulted in solutions (in terms of working capability) delivered iteratively to end-users through collaborative engagement with government program office and users.

## Appendix 1: Response Template

### 4. Other Recommendations.

- a. *What other recommendations do you have for the DoD to consider when contracting for software development solutions? These may be informed by successful contracting arrangements with commercial entities or other corporate best practices.*
- b. *In addition to classroom training and local policies/direction, the Software Acquisition Pathway offers [policy and guidance for contracting for software solutions](#). What additional guidance would you offer to DoD software programs and Contracting Officers?*

### 5. Follow-on Engagements.

*Would your company be interested in participating in follow-on market research to this RFI (e.g., Q&A sessions, one-on-one discussions, roundtables)?*