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Q&A responses from the Airbourne DNA Collection briefing call held on Thursday 4th May 2023

Question	Response
When is the 12 week time period expected to start?	<i>We anticipate a Sprint 1 start date to be around July/Aug 2023 subject to contracting.</i>
In terms of the costings are there any ineligible costs that you're looking at when people are putting their costings together?	<i>Eligible project costs relate to direct research and development expenditure: Labour, Overhead, Materials, Capital Equipment, Travel &amp; Subsistence. Any wider costs necessary to carry out your project should be highlighted in your application.</i>
Who is the funding body?	<i>The funding body is HMGCC/DSTL - the Authority who will oversee all technology development &amp; project outcomes directly with the Supplier. Commercial engagement and contracting will be engaged through Cranfield Defence &amp; Security on behalf of the Authority.</i>
What sort of size range in particle composition would you be wanting to demonstrate efficient collection of?	<i>This challenge focus is more about the ability to collect DNA rather than a particular particle size.</i>
We don't have an MVP but we have a bread-box, so is it possible to apply at a very early stage in our development for this kind of technology?	<i>Yes, we are looking for any range of Technical Readiness Levels (TRL's).</i>
12 weeks is a very short time for a feasibility study - exactly what will be considered a success?	<i>Success will be assessed on a case by case basis, but could - for example - be a proof of concept for a new/novel capability, or it could be the tailoring of a more mature TRL capability for our specific use case with a pathway to exploitation.</i>
What size of demonstrator are you looking for?	<i>A small form factor would be more desirable, however, we have a number of scenarios ranging from 'live' situations where noise generation would be problematic through to others where a larger device that produces noise would be acceptable.</i>
What if any funding caps are in place for a university? 80% FPC?	<i>The project has an indicative budget of £60k which we expect to be in line with eligible costs (above). Academic applicants are advised that this is direct funding, not grant, and should be costed accordingly.</i>
Would it be a part of any proposal to look into methods of getting our device into a room?	<i>It is not our priority, however, if at the end of this activity, the only thing we got out of it was a delivery method to get inside, we would not have met our requirement. However there is certainly an opportunity for collaboration with other people so that if you only have a delivery method and other originations have the device to collect DNA, that would also be welcome. We are interested in full and/or part solutions that could be integrated with other parties to provide capabilities able to meet our use case.</i>
Let's say we are shortlisted when can we start spending on some of the materials we need to buy and how will you reimburse us?	<i>The eligible costs are based on a fixed price, 12-week activity. The proposal submitted must address the technical and financial aspects of your project within this period. Eligible costs will be invoiced at the end of each sprint - typically monthly - with costs distributed equally across the 3 sprint periods. Applicants are advised not to work at risk until contracts and purchase orders are awarded. We work on an Agile methodology, a start date is agreed and the project would run for 12 weeks, ideally with three payment gateways using an agreed Minimum Viable Products (MVP) for each gateway. Payment will be made at the end of gateway. Bidders are advised not to work at risk until contracts and purchase orders are awarded.</i>
What do you mean by collaboration with Government?	<i>By Government we mean the NSTIx initiative which is a government-led science, technology and innovation partnership that enables coherent and agile delivery of innovative national security R&amp;D outcomes. We encourage collaboration with us over the 12-week period, to get the best use of expertise from stakeholders involved in the project (government/industry/academia).</i>
Would you consider an enrichment protocol to enrich the low biomass within air?	<i>Yes we are open to all suggestions. Ultimately we are interest in a process and technique that works to collect human DNA</i>
If we had two or three partners collaborating, how would this work financially?	<i>"1.) Consortium Approach: We would require a single, Lead Partner to make the application &amp; where multiple parties are involved the lead partner acts as the single contract holder for all elements of work. The supporting aspects of the project completed by other organisation would be carried as a sub-contractor to the Lead Partner. It is important to note here that the lead would be responsible for flowing down all of the contractual terms which would include payments for each part of the project &amp; the use of resulting IPR.  2.) Aligned Projects: Where collaboration might be prohibitive then applicants should submit individual projects and provide details of alignment with related projects. Each applicant would then be contracted directly as individual organisations with collaboration under a single delivery managers remit.  The budget is suggested at £60k for each organisation in a consortium model."</i>
If we had three departments collaborating in a university, would this be the same?	<i>This would be considered one organisation, so the amount would be a maximum of £60k.</i>
If I put my proposal through as a single applicant working with a number of other organisations, how would this work in terms of contractual T&Cs regarding not being able to subcontract?	<i>You can apply as single applicants stating you wish to work collaboratively with [named organisations] or you can bid together with one acting as the lead. The contract framework is 1:1 as set-out above.</i>
We could support all aspects of this challenge but there is only a limited budget and timeframe. Am I right in thinking you are not looking for a full end solution at this point?	<i>We see the 12-weeks as a feasibility study. If you can prove that technology is possible there is a good chance of follow-on funding.</i>
When will the project actually start?	<i>We aim to get you on contract within 4-weeks following the pitch event. So 4-6 weeks is average.</i>
We have already addressed some elements of this challenge but this is not in the public domain	<i>Please apply. Your application and work is under a government NDA. If you can evidence this and the proposal is successful, then you will be invited to work with us.</i>
How can we find partners to collaborate with?	<i>Speak with your collaboration partner or IUK KTN for introductions to possible partners or use the Teams chat from the Briefing Call.</i>
Are you interested in active or passive working prototypes?	<i>Both scenarios would be appropriate.</i>
How much detail would you like in the costings?	<i>Costings should be at an appropriate level of detail to support the key delivery milestones and/or T&amp;M activities in your proposal. We are not expecting granular costings.</i>
We have an aerosol sampler and can demonstrate that it can collect similar size samples and particle composition to DNA without doing DNA collection, would that be OK?	<i>We would be interested in proving the particle size but also that DNA can be collected. We can assist in that, provide us a sample we can test, or consider collaborating with someone else on the call.</i>

<p>What is the turnaround time for the payments once we submit our invoice?</p>	<p><i>This an extract from the Contract: The Contractor shall submit an invoice upon delivery or within 28 days of meeting any milestone set out in the request for quotation or proposal to the satisfaction of the Authority or otherwise within 28 days of supplying the Goods or Services to the satisfaction of the Authority. The invoice shall show the amount of VAT and include: the Purchase Order Line Number, the correct delivery address and the description of Goods or Services corresponding to the Purchase Order. The Authority shall pay the Contractor within 30 days of receipt of an invoice except where an invoice is disputed or the Authority deems the invoice to be incomplete or inaccurate. The Authority shall return any incomplete or inaccurate invoices to the Contractor.</i></p>
<p>Is the test environment going to be provided by Cranfield or DSTL?</p>	<p><i>HMGCC could support sample DNA testing.</i></p>
<p>Can we include a collaborator from overseas. It would account for consulting/advisory time. Is it possible for us to lead the 12-week sprints but have them as part of our advisory team to provide their expertise.</p>	<p>Overseas collaborators are welcome subject to the terms UK prohibitive countries list.</p>
<p>Some of the devices need to be imported and the lead time is up to 6 weeks. As these devices are expensive, we can't procure them prior to getting the award. Would you be able to confirm when exactly is the formal announcement of the award and the start date for this project?</p>	<p><i>We aim to make a decision shortly after the Pitch Day on Wed 14th June 2023 for an anticipated start date of late July early August 2023.</i></p>

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