
Exercise BISON COUNTER 23 (BC23) – Defence Industry Engagement

- Call for Expression of Interest -

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Industry Engagement with Exercise Bison Counter 23 (BC23) is for Industry to share with the exercise Target Audience (End-users) the newest developments in C-IED related equipment and material, as well as provide an opportunity for direct interaction between Industry and End-users, fostering a closer alignment between operational requirements and technological developments.

BACKGROUND

The EU Global Strategy states that *“A solid European defence, technological and industrial base needs a fair, functioning and transparent internal market, security of supply, and a structured dialogue with defence relevant industries.”* At the European Defence Agency’s (EDA) Ministerial Steering Board in April 2021, Defence Ministers supported EDA’s revised approach towards establishing a structured dialogue and enhanced engagement with industry based on a set of priority actions, which is extensive to Industry’s participation in exercises, experimentation and demonstrations whereby Industry can contribute to maintaining and enhancing the capabilities of military personnel, through interaction and exchange experience. In this context, engagement with industry on capability development is understood to be outside the procurement phase and is intended to improve interaction between Industry and Member States.

Bison Counter is a series of live multinational exercises covering all C-IED enabling capabilities (planning and prioritization, search, detection, disposal, collection of exploitable materials, laboratorial technical exploitation). Its objective is to train the technical level skills, to integrate the technical enablers at the tactical level and to validate the full C-IED operational cycle.

The purpose of the BC23 will be to deploy a multinational C-IED Task Force within a dynamic operational scenario containing elements both of irregular and conventional threats. BC23 will be conducted from 08 to 24 November 2023 with its main location at Zaragoza, Spain. A Target Audience from 650 to 1000 military personnel is expected, coming from 14 EU Member States, as well as from other relevant multinational C-IED organizations, based on data from previous editions.

Bison Counter is one of the current EDA initiatives addressing the EU Capability Development Priority *“Develop C-IED and CBRNe Capabilities Based on Newly Available Technology and Training (Ground Combat Capabilities, Enhance Protection of Forces module)”* and supporting the implementation of its corresponding Strategic Context Case (SCC).

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The contributing Member States to the Bison Counter C-IED Exercises Capability Building (BC-EX) Category B Project and EDA invite C-IED related Industry, including SMEs and startups, to participate to Exercise BC23. Industry is expected to:

- Present and/or demonstrate the newest developments in C-IED related equipment and material, through a commercial stand and/or a demonstration, for the duration of the Industry Day and Distinguished Visitors Day, from 1 up to 2 days.
- Make available C-IED related equipment and material for testing and experimentation by the Exercise Target Audience (End-users), for the duration of the Field Exercise phase (from 5 up to 10 days) – option available only for entities established within the EDA participant Member States and Norway.

Participation in this Call for Expression of Interest is open to companies of any size as well as academic, research institutes and associations or groupings of industrial suppliers, as well as any partnerships of the above mentioned.

Interested participants are invited to express their interest by providing a short Abstract describing how they intend to participate, the innovativeness and relevance of the technical solutions proposed, as well as ability to stimulate the discussion on implementation of new technologies to C-IED capability enablers.

The method to submit proposals and the eligibility and evaluation criteria for selecting proposals are depicted below.

INSTRUCTIONS ON PROVIDING ABSTRACTS

Abstracts should be limited to 300 words, though length will not be used as an exclusion criterion. They should not contain commercially sensitive information. One entity could send proposals only for one of the expected participation topics, or both, if wanted. Proposals may be made available to the EDA participant Member States' representatives, including those from submitters that were not selected for participation, should they not have an opt out of supplying their proposals formally expressed (proper attribution will be observed).

Proposals should be submitted **by 27 March 2023**, via the EDA platform established for this purpose in the following web address: <https://europeandefenceagency.typeform.com/to/ZYLasn0D>. Only proposals made through the EDA platform indicated will be accepted.

Should you have any questions, please contact only by email **EDA PO C-IED Mr. Pedro Basto** pedro.basto@eda.europa.eu.

EDA will assess the papers according to the criteria below while also striving to select a broad spectrum of participants to ensure a fair, objective, and balanced display of C-IED equipment, as much as possible.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Credibility – Defence Industry proponents must have a demonstrated track record of output and an effective market presence or knowledge of C-IED and C-IED enabling capabilities. Lack of defence expertise will not be a criterion for exclusion.

Relevance – Proposals must be unarguably linked to one or more of the C-IED enabling capabilities and demonstrated effective applicability to the C-IED domain.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Established place of activity – Defence Industry proponents will be prioritized based on their established place of activity¹ in the following order: contributing Member States of the BC-EX Cat B Project, EDA participating Member States and Norway, and other.

Innovativeness – The level of innovation and originality demonstrated in the Abstract. Ability to propose challenging application/integration of new technologies to the field of C-IED and C-IED enabling capabilities.

Lifecycle approach – The involvement of the Industry proponent from research and development to decommissioning, including upgrading, as regards the systems/equipment/technologies presented in the Abstract.

¹ Entities which have their activities on European soil but are dependent on entities outside Europe, or which are subsidiary, or majority owned by holdings established outside of EU, will be considered “other”, even if they have established place of activity within EU.