Document Details: Clarification Questions – Hidden stab vests for women

Deadline for questions: 22/10/26

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1.0 Technical

	Question	Answer
1.1	In regards to the challenge, what exactly are you looking for style wise? There's plenty of company's offering thinner vests/T shirt/Hoodie style protective clothing, so are you after a thinner T shirt that's abit easier to wear or you looking for more smart wear such as dresses/turtlenecks/hot weather clothing?	Any viable options. A thin vest that could be concealed under a t shirt would provide maximum usage across all profiles. We are also happy to accept T shirt proposals. Proposals of options that could be worked into different profiles would also be considered
1.2	**Stab and slash verification** The challenge requires protection against both stab and slash threats and a roadmap toward Home Office Body Armour Standard 2017. For the slash element, does HMGCC expect applicants to consider the separate Home Office slash-resistant materials test methodology in addition to the BAS17 knife/spike route?	Our baseline is KR1 and SP1 2017 standard. Any additional slash protection is welcomed but not essential.
1.3	**Target knife/spike protection level** Is there a particular minimum knife and/or spike protection level that HMGCC would like the Phase 1 material swatch or demonstrator to target, for example	KR1 and SP1 standards would be the baseline, if a proposal can demonstrate that the proposal can reach BAS17 compliance it will be considered but would require proof of adherance.

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	KR1 and/or SP1, or may applicants propose an appropriate level supported by a justified roadmap toward BAS17 compliance?	
1.4	**Evidence expected for the bladed-weapon demonstration** By the end of the 12-week project, what level of evidence is expected for the required demonstration against bladed weapons: accredited independent test-house evidence, witnessed controlled laboratory testing, or internally generated engineering test evidence supported by a subsequent certification plan?	We would look for accredited testing, and would likely look across HMG for independent clarification
1.5	**Scope of the wearable demonstrator** For the desirable wearable demonstrator, is the expectation a complete covert torso garment, or would a functionally representative prototype be acceptable where it demonstrates the critical protective, female-fit, mobility, comfort and concealment interfaces while formal certification remains part of the follow-on roadmap?	A functional prototype would be accepted as long as the proposal could be covertly concealed.
1.6	**Access to representative users** Would HMGCC be able to facilitate access during the project to representative female close-protection users, user representatives or suitable anonymised use-case information for fit, comfort and usability evaluation? If so, are there any security, ethics or other constraints that applicants should incorporate into their project planning?	Representative female officers would be available at Demonstration phases, however there are security constraints to personal information

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1.7	**Baseline for weight and thermal-comfort improvement** The challenge desirably seeks weight below existing commercially available solutions and enhanced breathability and thermal comfort. Does HMGCC have particular incumbent products, reference configurations or metrics against which it would like these improvements to be demonstrated, or may applicants define and justify an appropriate benchmark set?	Applicants are welcome to define and justify
1.8	We would also welcome confirmation that a **modular approach to the handgun-ballistic stretch goal** would be acceptable where incorporating ballistic protection directly into the base garment would adversely affect the primary stab/slash, concealment, weight or comfort objectives.	We are not currently seeking Handgun ballistic protection, but if in incorporating this it would affect the concealment we would consider this on merit.
1.9	Are applications from a Netherlands-based business in collaboration with a European technical manufacturer eligible?	We welcome applications from all business's, as long as the proposals meet the criteria outlined, and that the business can justify suitably agreeable turnaround times for any products that are proposed and potentially taken forward
1.10	Can user research, female-specific product validation and commercial feasibility work form part of the funded project alongside technical prototyping?	Not sure on the question here, but research and technical prototyping would fall under the scope. Commercial feasibility would likely fall outside of the funding and female specific validation would be conducted by us.
1.11	Does "stab and slash proof" mean a specific protection level under the Home Office Body Armour Standard	KR1 initially during the feasibility phase, with spike SP1 protection aspiration required before final sign off.

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	2017 (for example KR1, KR2, SP1)? Is spike resistance in scope?	
1.12	What counts as “a demonstration of effectiveness against bladed weapons”? Is in-house testing against the standard’s blades acceptable, or must a recognised lab do it?	In house testing at the feasibility phase. Recognised Lab Home Office accreditation would be required at before final acceptance.
1.13	Is there a preferred or approved test house, and can test costs be funded from the award?	This is yet to be agreed.
1.14	How will TRL 5 be judged, and what evidence do assessors expect?	This is still to be determined
1.15	Will HMGCC give access to female close protection officers for fit and comfort feedback, or must applicants arrange their own users?	Applicants must arrange their own users in the first instance.
1.16	Other than comfort and fit, are there any other areas of failure that need reviewing? And are there any interviews/quotes from female officers highlighting these issues?	The main issues are a comfortable fit around the bust and that the vest does not ride up when sitting.

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1.17	Are there certain pieces of uniform it must fit under or over?	No uniform, Everyday clothing
1.18	Our experience is in the fully bespoke market, is a fully bespoke fit project a feasible option for the target market, or is it more desirable that the final product is a more improved version of a standard women's size garment?	Both would be useful. As having protection in Standard women's clothing in the summer months would be beneficial
1.19	Is there a target price if this product goes to market?	No
1.20	For the demonstration of effectiveness against bladed weapons, is testing at an accredited facility required, or is an in-house test protocol acceptable at this feasibility phase?	In house testing protocol is required at the feasibility phase.
1.21	**Protective-performance target.** Is there a prescribed knife-resistance target for the phase-one demonstration, and is spike resistance required in this phase?	Yes, both KR1 and SP1 are the baseline
1.22	**Minimum coverage.** Is there a prescribed minimum anatomical protection area for the torso that must remain covered during movement, or should applicants derive and justify coverage using Home Office guidance?	All the vital organs need to be protected across the Torso

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1.23	**Slash-performance evidence.** The Protective Equipment Database FAQ currently states that Home Office Slash Resistant Materials testing is suspended. Which test method and acceptance criteria should phase-one proposals use to demonstrate slash resistance of the proposed protective construction?	Our main performance criteria are Knife Stab (KR1) and Spike (SP1). Slash performance resistance/evidence is a secondary requirement. It will be beneficial to know but not essential.
1.24	**Technical readiness:** What minimum evidence of existing protective material performance is expected at application stage?	KR1 and SP1 are the baseline standard.
1.25	How will “weight below existing commercial solutions” be benchmarked (which products, which sizes)?	3kg for a medium-size vest – Fortis Range
1.26	If scaled up, where will vests be produced and what equipment does this producer have at their disposal. are there manufacturing constraints we need to consider?	This is detail is unknown at this time.

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2.0 Delivery

2.1	What intellectual property and future commercialisation rights would successful applicants retain?	All IP remains the property of the solution provider. Commercialisation information is detailed in the terms and conditions on our website
2.2	Is the £60k a total across both awards, or per proposal?	Per proposal
2.3	**Intellectual property:** Are there specific expectations regarding ownership of newly developed designs and technologies within a consortium	All IP remains the property of the solution provider. If in a consortia it is up to the relevant partners to decide and make IP ownership arrangements Commercialisation information is detailed in the terms and conditions on our website
2.4	Can any costs for purchasing existing products be funded from the grant?	Yes
2.5	Is there a set project duration?	As per the challenge form 12 weeks
2.6	What happens after the grant? (Further funding, scale-up?)	That is down to the sponsor and the solution provider to discuss following the results and completion of Phase 1. There is the possibility it could be developed further in an additional phase but this is not guaranteed.

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2.7	The call gives a target kick-off of December 2026 and a 12-week project duration. Can project initiation (contract and onboarding) be separated from the start of the 12-week delivery period, to allow lead time for materials procurement and to mitigate delays from the December festive period? If so, can materials costs incurred in that lead-in period be covered within the project budget?	The onboarding and contracting is separate from the 12 weeks. The sprint layout for the 12 weeks work is prescribed by the solution provider. Lead times for purchasing of equipment pre 12 weeks can be discussed at onboarding but can be incorporated into the contract with agreement from the sponsor and contracting authority
2.8	How will the project be paid? Is there an initial payment, or is it invoiced against milestones or monthly? What are the payment terms (for example, 30 days from invoice)?	Invoiced at the end of each sprint. For payment terms Please refer to the Co-Creation Terms and Conditions **Clause 4 - Invoices and Payment**
2.9	**Lead applicant eligibility:** Can Female Techpreneur act as the lead applicant where specialist technical development, manufacturing and testing are delivered through consortium partners?	Yes
2.10	**Consortium arrangements:** Must technical partners be formally confirmed at submission, or can named partners be finalised following selection?	Where known, all technical partners should be declared at proposal stage. This will be clarified prior to any contract award, however the Authority reserves the right to reject any person or persons proposed to work under the Contract (see Clause 19 - Solution Providers Personnel of the Co-Creation Terms and Conditions). Where a consortium is proposed, or subcontractors are included within a proposal, a single lead Solution Provider will be appointed and will hold the Co-Creation contract. The lead Solution Provider is responsible for the delivery of the contract in full and for managing any contractual or commercial arrangements with consortium partners or subcontractors. We do

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		not enter into separate contractual relationships with other parties within the consortium and all obligations and deliverables remain the responsibility of the lead Solution Provider.
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2.12		

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