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Stand-Off Detection of Volatile Organic Compounds Tuesday 6th October 2009, 12:30 – 16:30 Centre for Defence Enterprise, Start Electron, Harwell

The Centre for Defence Enterprise is the Ministry of Defence's gateway for industry, academia and innovators to help ensure our Armed Forces are best equipped now and in the future.

CDE provides a rapid response with a range of advice, assistance and research funding. To help you better understand the challenges and needs of the UK's Armed Forces, CDE hosts monthly Seminars as an opportunity to meet MoD experts and decision makers.

The Centre for Defence Enterprise, in conjunction with the MOD Counter-Terrorism Science & Technology Centre, is hosting a seminar on the stand-off detection of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). The seminar will launch a call for innovative research proposals for technology that can help locate trace amounts of VOCs in a wider environment.

Currently, dogs are often used to conduct area searches for targets such as explosives, buried objects and people. All of these targets are releasing small quantities of airborne chemicals, known as Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Dogs will remain a key asset for searches but MOD is seeking other methods to perform this task with minimal intervention by personnel.

The challenging scenario is that an obscured (cannot be observed) target is releasing trace amounts of VOCs. None of the VOCs are likely to be individually unique to the target which could be anywhere within a target area of approx 1 square mile. Manpower resources are limited and therefore potential solutions must operate with minimal demands on personnel. In the context of this call, the term 'stand-off' means that personnel should not be required to enter the search area, but sensors can.

MOD is already aware of existing products that can detect and identify either pre-defined specific or ranges of chemicals. For this call MOD is looking for novel concepts to provide additional capability against this unique and extremely difficult challenge.

Up to £400K is available to fund multiple highly innovative research / proof of principle proposals addressing the above scenario. Full details of the call will be announced at the seminar on 6th October, together with timescales for submission and award of contracts. It is intended that contracts should be awarded by the end of 2009.

A networking lunch will be available between 1230 and 1330. Spaces are limited and early application is advised via our website at www.science.mod.uk. Confirmation of attendance along with joining instructions & directions will be sent once registration has closed. MOD does not charge for attendance at CDE seminars.

www.science.mod.uk