

UK Outlines Plans for Ardent Wolf Maritime CESH

The UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) is looking to procure a new maritime communications electronic support measures (CESM) capability to replace the Hammerhead CESH suite currently fitted to Royal Navy (RN) Type 23 frigates.

Given the project name "Ardent Wolf," the new contract is planned to cover the delivery, installation and in-service support of a CESH system founded on a readily available COTS product already at a high Technical Readiness Level.

RN Type 23 frigates are currently fitted with the Hammerhead CESH system supplied by Babcock in partnership with Boeing-owned Argon ST. According to an MoD tender notice published in late May, Ardent Wolf will utilize the extant CESH infrastructure on the Type 23 frigates, with the contract expected to deliver a minimum of seven COTS-based systems. The full scope of the requirement includes equipment installation/embodiment, repair and maintenance, spares provisioning, calibration, system and design safety, contractor logistics support, training, security accreditation, capability resilience, reliability, documentation management, and possible solution updates and upgrades.

Due to the security aspects of the requirement, the Ardent Wolf competition is limited to UK prime contractors only. An Invitation to Negotiate is planned for issue to up to six shortlisted bidders in September, with a contract award scheduled for April 2022. The contract is expected to last six years from the date of award.

In April, Babcock received a £1.3 million Hammerhead Life Extension (HHLE) contract to sustain the existing CESH

equipment in service. Under the HHLE contract, awarded by Defence Equipment and Support's Joint Electronic Surveillance delivery team, the system will now remain in service through to a revised out-of-service date of March 2025. – R. Scott