

<b>Request for Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA 20-287)</b>			
Consult guidance notes whilst completing this form			
TIMING <sup>1</sup> : URGENT/ROUTINE*Delete as applicable			
Requesting Agency	DCMS - Counter Disinformation Cell (CDC)	Operation Name	Op RESCRIPT
Department of State	DCMS	JMC/RPoC	JMC(L)
Requesting Point of Contact	Name	Oscar Tapp-Scotting	Name
	Role	Deputy Director, Security and International	Role
	Tel	[REDACTED]	Tel
	Email	[REDACTED]	Email
DTG of request	301100JUN20	JRLO Aware	[REDACTED]
PART 1 – REQUESTING AGENCY TO COMPLETE SUPPORTED BY MOD LO			
<b>1) Headline summary of situation</b>			
<p>This request seeks military support to the DCMS Counter-Disinformation Cell (CDC), to ensure HMG coverage of the mis/disinformation threat and information environment, as further incidences of disinformation are anticipated in relation to key events, including the launch of a vaccine.</p> <p>To note, Defence analysts joined the CDC wider structure as part of a wider MACA tasking, which attached them to the Cabinet Office's Rapid Response Unit on 23 Mar. This team provided mis/disinformation analytical capability during the first three months of the COVID crisis under Op RESCRIPT. This agreement with the Cabinet Office ended on 5 Jul. Following this, DCMS and Ministry of Defence agreed a new MACA, which resourced 77 Brigade analysts from 5 July to 3 August, and RAF analysts from 3 August to 31 August.</p>			
<b>2) What is happening? – NOT initially required for URGENT MACA</b>			
<p><b>Background: DCMS CDC current capabilities and gaps</b></p> <p>The DCMS CDC function is to bring together cross-government monitoring and analysis capabilities, to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent, scope and reach of dis/misinformation on Covid-19, and to ensure appropriate action is taken.</p> <p>Multiple analytical units feed into this unit:</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign Office Open Source Unit (OSU) - focus on monitoring hostile state disinformation activity</li> <li>• Consultancies: GDI (fringe platforms)</li> <li>• Defence (RAF) - focus on rapid analytical response and open source social media data (until 31 August)</li> </ul> <p>Despite Covid-19 crisis response standing down in some areas, the CDC continues to identify harmful misinformation and disinformation narratives. This is a live threat, and the CDC's assessment of future trends such as potential for anti-vaccination narratives, shows that there is a need to continue to fill a capability gap that will be lost from 31 August, as described by the requirement.</p>			
<b>3) Why must action be taken? – NOT initially required for URGENT MACA</b>			
<p><b>Impact of support being declined:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without this capability, the CDC will be limited in its ability to monitor and assess disinformation</li> </ul>			

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 2018DIN03-028: **Urgent:** There is time to consult but a rapid decision is required. Abbreviation of this form is acceptable for initial submission. **Routine:** All other requests. Include the timing for the requested effect if appropriate. Annotate if a major incident has been declared.

narratives on social media platforms. Other analytical units monitor other information sources - [REDACTED], and Foreign Office OSU cover hostile state backed media and social media. The CDC will therefore be limited in its coverage of the information environment, making the UK exposed to what could be harmful narratives with real world impact.

- In addition, the CDC will lack a unit that can provide reactive analysis, with a 1-2 hour turnaround, making it more difficult to identify and respond to harmful incidents of disinformation at pace and thus limits its reach
- This rapid analysis was vital in informing our initial response to the critical incidents of misinformation that led to the burning of 5G towers. This analysis informed our early comms interventions, and helped us flag this narrative to platforms and inform their response. If the request for support were declined, it would be impossible to mitigate future mis/disinformation narratives in the same rapid timeframe. This would increase the risk of real-world harm from COVID-19 related mis/disinformation.

**4) What is the task required?**

**Requirement:**

Military open source analytical support is required to inform HMG's understanding of the Covid-19 disinformation threat picture, and inform early interventions to limit the reach and spread of harmful narratives. This operation would include monitoring open source social media data, to fulfil the following functions:

- Daily reporting of key COVID-related disinformation & misinformation narratives, giving initial assessment, engagement and risk of content
- Weekly analysis of emerging and enduring narratives, giving recommendations on approaches to counter them
- Reactive analysis (1-2 hour turnaround) to emerging threats, to inform decisions on early interventions such as rebuttal which are time critical, following tasking from the CDC
- Identifying content that breaches social media platforms' Terms of Service to minimise impact of harmful narratives

CDC would act as the coordinating function for this unit, as it does with other analytical units including FCO OSU and [REDACTED].

**Impact:**

- Provide HMG understanding of disinformation and misinformation about COVID-19 which has the potential to pose a real world impact in four main areas: damaging public health, damaging UK reputation, targeting ethnic minorities or poses risk to public order. We have seen instances of all of these during the Covid 19 crisis.
- Provide analysis that underpins response options, including communications and operational responses, that mitigate the effect of harmful dis/misinformation.
- In both of these provisions provided to HMG, Defence uniquely give insight into immediate threats and those that are identifiable on social media platforms, as these functions do not exist elsewhere in the Counter Disinformation Unit.

Conduct Open Source Media monitoring and analysis to IDENTIFY and REPORT on DISMIS related to COVID-19 in the UK. Working hours would be 0800-1800 Mon to Fri, but also on call outside of those hours. Reporting would include FLASHREPS, Daily Reports, weekly reports, ad-hoc reporting, and indication of breaches of CSPs ToS. Currently the Army are providing 2x Liaison Officers and 2x Monitoring Teams (1 Team Cmd and 3 x Operators per team).

**5) What alternatives have been considered?**

**Mutual Aid:** External contractors are already employed and will continue to provide additional skills. DCMS has a contract with the Global Disinformation Index (GDI), who monitor and assess disinformation narratives on fringe platforms.

**Commercial Alternatives:** Home Office and FCO Analysts are engaged in the Cross-Whitehall disinformation response. They have been working closely with the Commercial team on designing an accelerated tender process to identify a suitable commercial provider. The tender is expected to run over Oct/Nov with a new supplier in place by late Nov. However, given the nature of the tendering process and current resource pressures, there is a risk this new provider will not be in place by then.

In addition, they are also considering the support that the XWH Counter Disinformation Unit will provide to the wider Government work on Winter Preparedness, particularly in relation to EU Exit. This will increase the demand on the team and the work required

<b>Other:</b> Tender process in place.			
<b>6) Liabilities and charges (delete where applicable)</b>			
6.1) Requesting Authority accepts responsibility for own risk assessment?	6.2) Requesting authority accepts own indemnity against loss, damage, injury or death while on MOD estate	6.3) Requesting authority aware that costs may be recovered by the MOD?	
Yes    No    N/A	Yes    No N/A	Yes    No	
<b>Requesting Officer<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>PART 2 – MOD LO TO COMPLETE MOD Resource Assessment</b>			
7.1) Task	7.2) Suggested Assets	7.3) Timings	7.4) Locations - Report RV/Task Locn:
IDENTIFY, REPORT  As para 4	2 x LOs 2 x Teams (1 Team Cmd and 3 x Operators per team) 10 Pax in total	5 Jul – 31 Aug <del>1 Sep 20 – 31 Oct 20</del> 31 Oct 20 – 28 Feb 21 Monthly Reviews.	Permanent Duty Station. This task can be done remotely.
<b>MOD LO</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b> 11 Oct 20
<b>PART 3 – MOD LO TO COMPLETE – NOT REQUIRED FOR URGENT MACA Risk Statement</b>			
8.1) Risk to Defence Outputs	The current sS solution comes at a cost of operators being used out of role and additional training burden. A wider defence solution should be incorporate Navy (HMS SULTAN), RAF (RAF WYTON) and Army (77 Bde) who have operators trained to conduct this work.		
8.2) Risk to Defence Personnel and Equipment			
8.3) Reputational Risk	Little, if any. There could be potential presentational risk of Defence 'spying' or conducting 'PSYOPs' on the UK but highly unlikely. If Def does not carry this out until the civilian option is established and disinformation is spread, it could result in harmful misinformation and disinformation narratives		
<b>PART 4 - COMMENT BY HQ SJC(UK) To include a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) costing</b>			
<b>Extension:</b>			
<b>Summary of Cost Estimate</b>			
<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Total Full Cost</b>	<b>Total Marginal Cost</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>	£115,391.36	£0.00	
<b>Personnel Allowances</b>	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>Accommodation &amp; Catering</b>	£7,625.00	£7,625.00	
<b>Transport</b>	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>Air Assets</b>	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>Infrastructure</b>	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>Equipment</b>	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>Miscellaneous Costs</b>	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>Marginal ROM cost for ext 1 Sep 20 – 31 Oct 20 = £7625.00</b>			

<sup>2</sup> Empowered to agree spend.

**HQ COMMENTS (Extension 2):** On Balance, HQ SJC(UK) supports this DCMS MACA request for a further extension of 10x Defence Analyst to support the DCMS Counter-Disinformation Cell (CDC) to ensure continued HMG coverage of the mis/disinformation threat and information environment.

The unique pressures of monitoring Covid-19 related mis/disinformation necessitated monitoring support which initially came via the CO MACA agreement with MOD and was then extended through DCMS own MACA arrangement (Jul). DCMS has engaged with teams on their capacity to provide additional monitoring but they do not have the resource available.

**Test against MACA Principles:** POLAD comments below that the threshold in some of the MACA principles may not be met, however in the context of the ongoing UK response to the COVID Pandemic, *"notwithstanding the above, under exceptional circumstances, agreed usually at ministerial level, it may be necessary to waive temporarily the above criteria. This may include major events of national and international importance, or for an event that is catastrophic in nature"* applies and the DCO dated 16 Sep 20 provides the legal authority for Defence to support.

**SPO - Dep Hd Pol CT & UK Ops: Direction from CDS** - Given the wider context with vaccine development and growing disinformation in this area, Defence should support, provided opportunity costs were tolerable, with preference to diversify the force gen away from a 77X focus.

As such the expectation is that Defence **will support** provided:

- Opportunity cost is tolerable;
- Tasking is no more contentious than the Counter Disinformation support that has already been provided.

Commitment to support should include regular review points, to ensure that as the activity develops it remains an appropriate use of Defence resources. The requesting department is expected to rapidly move to commercial provision where appropriate.

**LEGAD / POLAD:** This is a contentious request when measured against the MACA principles (JDP 02) - MACA in the following respects:

- *Principle 2;* Commercial alternatives are being sorted but what has been done relating to mutual aid is unclear.
- *Principle 3; or Capability* is clearly an issue and there is mention of resource pressures but no further information.
- *Principle 4.* Some capability is available from a contractor (CDI) but the support to this MACA has been running since 23 Mar 20; it is unclear what has been done to resolve this capability shortfall in the interim.

**Responses:**

**Commercial Alternatives:**

- As noted above, the initial monitoring support was provided through a CO MACA arrangement which DCMS had to inherit at very short notice in July 2020.
- They subsequently conducted initial market engagement with providers to identify a commercial alternative but were advised by DCMS commercial that given the size of the contract, they are legally required to go to tender.
- As such, they have had to take the time to prepare the relevant documents and design the invitation to tender and follow the mandated timescales for such a process which has prevented them from getting a replacement in place by the end of October.

**Other Capability:**

- They have had reporting on fringe platforms provided to them by an external contractor, GDI.
- They were able to extend this arrangement once but DCMS Commercial guidelines prohibit them from renewing this arrangement further so their relationship with this contractor will also end in October.
- This requirement for fringe platform monitoring has been wrapped up with the tender process as they look to identify a commercial provider to cover both mainstream and fringe platforms.

**J8 FINANCE** - Defence will charge DCMS marginal costs iaw the MinAF endorsed RESCRIPT charging policy

dated 21 Oct 20. Upon completion, it is the responsibility of the TLBs to coordinate to recover the costs from DCMS via a single invoice.

Marginal ROM cost for ext 31 Oct 20 – 28 Feb 21= **£15,000**

Full ROM cost for ext 31 Oct 20 – 28 Feb 21= **£241,999.41**

**AUTHORISATION:**

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Paul Wyatt 20201009-Covid  
letter.pdf C-Dinformation upd

<b>HQ SJC(UK) lead</b>	<b>Name</b> [REDACTED]	<b>Signature</b> [REDACTED]	<b>Date</b> [REDACTED]
<b>PART 5 – MOD APPROVAL (COMPLETED BY HQ SJC(UK))</b>			
<b>MOD Approval date</b>	<b>ACTORD</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	
<b>PART 6 – MACA CLOSURE – MOD LO TO COMPLETE</b>			
<b>MACA Completed as planned</b>	<b>MACA completed with the following variations:</b>	<b>MACA Cancelled</b>	
<b>MOD LO</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

**GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE COMPLETION OF ANNEX B**

**Part 1**

**Ser 1** – A single sentence outlining the current situation. Example: "Flood defences failing in Wainfleet, Lincolnshire threatening 550 properties."

**Ser 2** – Detailed description of the situation including predicted/expected developments. This section is not required for the initial submission of an URGENT MACA if the MOD LO has conducted a verbal brief with HQ SJC(UK). This section must be updated/completed once time allows.

**Ser 3** – An explanation of the clear need to act and an explanation of the consequences of not acting. This section is not required for the initial submission of an URGENT MACA if the MOD LO has conducted a verbal brief with HQ SJC(UK). This section must be submitted once time allows.

**Ser 4** – A clear description of the task that the requesting agency needs delivering. This should not be focussed on Defence; more an explanation of what needs to be achieved.

**Ser 5** – Details of mutual aid and commercial alternatives that have been considered and why they were discounted must be provided. Annotate if no commercial alternative exists.

**Ser 6** – This confirms that the requesting agency is aware of their responsibilities and liabilities.

**Part 2**

**Ser 7** – MOD LO should make an initial assessment on the likely assets/resource required to deliver the requested task. One line to be used per task. For example:

7.1) Task	7.2) Suggested Assets	7.3) Timings	7.4) Locations - Report RV/Task Locn:
<b>Plug breach in flood defences</b>	Chinook or other SH variant as location inaccessible by ground	ASAP for 24hrs	Initial RV at RAF Coningsby.
<b>Warn and inform at 550 houses</b>	1 x subunit	ASAP for 36hrs	RV at Prince William of Gloucester Barracks

**Part 3:** This is not required for the initial submission of an URGENT MACA but must follow on when time allows.

**Ser 8** – MOD LO is to outline risks. This will help inform RSOI and identify risks that require mitigation:

Ser 8.1 – any known risks to Defence Outputs.

Ser 8.2 – Any risk to personnel or equipment that is presented by the situation is to be identified to inform RSOI, to make deploying force elements aware of risks and to inform Duty Holders of the risks involved.

Ser 8.3 – MOD LO is to identify potential reputational risk to Defence throughout the task or through a failure to act.

**Part 4:** To be completed by HQ SJC(UK) providing comment on compliance with policy, precedent, charging regime, impact on concurrency, areas of risk, media, concurrency etc.

**Part 5:** To be completed by HQ SJC(UK) on receipt of OSW from SPO CT&UK Ops.

**Part 6:** To be completed by MOD LO no later than 5 working days from the completion of the MACA.