EFDI - EXERCISE ACCELERATOR 2.0

Proposal

Following the commitments made at the recent NATO Summit in Ankara and recognising the need to continue innovating and developing interoperability at pace, the British Army is pleased to announce EFDI ACCELERATOR 2.0 at the Defence BattleLab, Dorset. ACCELERATOR 2.0 will be conducted 14 – 24 September with a pause for the weekend 19 – 20 September. A Distinguished Visitors Day (DVD) will be held on the morning of 24 September, including an international Press Day.

The event is led by the British Army, in close cooperation with NATO Allied Land Command. It forms part of the effort to operationalise NATO's Eastern Flank Deterrence Initiative and sits within LANDCOM's Task Force X operational experimentation series.

Recognising the centrality of a data backbone, LANDCOM will deliver ACCELERATOR 1.0 in Latvia in August. LANDCOM will work alongside NATO Allied Command Transformation and the NATO Communications and Information Agency to integrate the EFDI Data Backbone into NATO's digital transformation efforts. ACCELERATOR 2.0 will provide participants with the opportunity to test and experiment within the same EFDI Data Backbone. This will help drive Sensor-Decider-Effecter-Sustain interoperability within a data network designed for the current threat, where data must move rapidly across a wide network of interconnected devices and across international borders.

ACCELERATOR 2.0 is explicitly an engineering sprint event. It is imperative that the participants are users, engineers and coders to maximise the effect for EFDI, interoperability and generation of Sensor-Decider-Effector-Sustain linkages.

This event will provide participants with the opportunity to have their technologies validated against NATO's defence planning priorities, published at the Ankara Summit. Applicants will be supported through the process to achieve acceptance. Additional credit will be given for any cross-capability integration opportunities identified.

For this event Integration is defined as:

Extending an open, standards-based application programming interface (API) or similar protocol (e.g., gRPC, WebSockets, MQTT, GraphQL, Model Context Protocol) and providing the associated interactive documentation.

Success will be your system exposing an interface that allows authorised participants connected through the EFDI Data Backbone to discover, access, exchange and consume your information. You are exposing an open interface that the EFDI Data Backbone (and other systems) can consume natively.

Digital Specification Standards

- Synchronous interfaces: Leverage OpenAPI/Swagger or similar industry standards for documenting RESTful APIs. participants must provide a .json or .yaml specification file defining endpoints, HTTP methods, schemas, and status codes.

- Protobuf: For Remote Procedural Calls. Participants must provide .proto files for both blocking and non-blocking implementations.

- For asynchronous interfaces and event-driven architectures (WebSockets, MQTT, Kafka), provide an AsyncAPI specification to map message schemas and channels.

Hosting and Posting Documentation

- The intent for participants is to host Interactive Portals (Swagger UI / ReDoc) hosted on the EFDI Data Backbone Environment and Catalogue. Interactive documentation directly alongside the API is the goal. This allows EFDI Data Backbone engineers to test endpoints, authenticate, and view request/response payloads directly from their browser without writing underlying code.

- Within the interactive documentation the intent is to provide exported collections paired with the specification so EFDI Data Backbone engineers can immediately begin making test calls.

Applications

Applications are welcome from existing in-service capabilities and industry partners with innovative, new technologies; all capabilities must be configured ready for integration now. ACCELERATOR 2.0 is casting a wide net, seeking to integrate a broad range of Sense, Decide, Effect and Sustain capabilities, although capabilities that fall out of these areas will still be considered for participation.

The application window will be open 3 August – 4 September, with applications being approved in three tranches:

- Tranche 1. 3 August – 14 August, with approval w/c 17 August 26.

- Tranche 2. 17 August – 28 August, with approval w/c 31 August.

- Tranche 3. 31 August – 4 September, with approval w/c 7 September.

Applicants are to submit a no more than a two-page proposal outlining their capability and readiness to integrate. All submissions are to be submitted before the end of each tranche window into the British Army's Digital Authority Mailbox: ArmyDSI-ADPComms@mod.gov.uk. Any late submissions will be moved into the subsequent tranches.

Requirements

Once approved, participants will receive a Welcome Pack including the technical details for gaining access to the EFDI Backbone website and onboarding prior to the start of the exercise. This is a pre-condition, not a preference, to minimise technical challenges during onboarding and maximise exercise interoperability time.

Participants must be ready to integrate on arrival, with access to any development environment they uniquely require enabled. Please pre-establish the credentials and configuration for your Integration Gateway connection and bring any systems that you intend to advance through ACCELERATOR 2.0.

All participants will be required to verify their identity before arrival. Further security requirements will be communicated separately.

Exposure

The NATO Innovation Fund (NIF). is NATO's Venture Capitalist (VC) fund, supported by 24 of the 32 NATO Allies. They invest in deep tech start-ups and scale-ups that support NATO's Defence, Security and Resilience (DSR). They are keen to hear from companies who fit these criteria, and who are seeking venture backing. The NIF also invests in other DSR VC funds, and we can make introductions to these funds where relevant.

NATO Defence Industry, Innovation and Armaments Division (D2IA). EFDI ACCELERATOR 2.0 is working with NATO D2IA to set out conditions for potential inclusion of participating solutions onto the NATO Innovative Solutions Catalogue. Successful solution integration results could potentially be included, too, for interested participants.

NATO DIANA invests in early-stage innovation through the DIANA Capital Network and accelerates capabilities towards NATO procurement competitions.

Capabilities and Requirements Integration Toolkit (CRIT). The NATO LANDCOM and USAREUR-AF,) objectively links requirements, capabilities, and integration opportunities (demonstrations, experiments, & exercises) by using AI to analyse massive amounts of data and identify linkages, allowing commanders and staffs across NATO to make data-driven investment decisions. Participation in ACCELERATOR 2.0 will be exposed to the CRIT for consideration.

DVD and Press Day. EFDI ACCELERATOR 2.0 will conduct a DVD 24 Sep 26, including Senior Officers from NATO LANDCOM, USAREUR-AF, NATO partner nations, NIF, DIANA Capital Network and CRIT, with a separate national and international press engagement day.