



ISSP Moves to RFP

Canada's ISSP aims to deliver a capability that to enhance tactical effectiveness on the battlefield

Canada's Integrated Soldier Systems Project will equip infantry heavy Task Forces (TF) with two ready for deployment or deployed, two undergoing operational training or on the road to high readiness and then a further two who are undertaking low level training and getting ready for operations. Milestones are for delivery to the field force in 2014 for Cycle 1 equipment and then these capabilities will be built up out to 2018-19.

The Project will deliver incremental performance capability overtime. Cycle 1 will deliver the Basic capability comprising the core assaulter capability with potential commander capability, depending on bids with Cycle 2 addressing the BASIC(+) capability with an improved capability but still limited by the architecture of the Basic system and Cycle 3 which delivers the Enhanced capability with the full capability expressed in the commander, assaulter, supporter variants.

Progressive network integration for Integrated Soldier System (ISS) begins with the PRR led voice today which is the current baseline, moving to network our dismounted

soldiers and eventually network them to their vehicles and command posts which will ultimately deliver sensor to shooter relationships to better execute fires, prosecute targets and improve situational awareness and eventually for greater effect on the tactical battlefield.

With over half the RFP document available electronically since January, the complete document is on course to for full released in September via the DND's contracting website.

Lt. Col. Jacques Levesque, Project Manager, Integrated Soldier System Project outlined the state of play for the procurement of ISSP, "We have a mandate and statement of requirements between us and I have a set amount of funds are we are moving to put into service what we agree on as an acceptable baseline. We are still open for feedback on our documentation because our aim is to be inconclusive because we are looking to produce COTS and MOTS technology that is available now that meets our requirement."

"We don't want to purchase a system that has the best commander's tablet or battery recharging system. We

want to purchase a system that gives the soldier the most help doing their jobs. In the weighting and requirements, the technical performance specifications are really focused on adding value to the dismounted soldier with one system for all soldiers." Additional capability for variant will be added in later versions and by Cycle three all three variants will be fielded.

About a year ago, ISSP had a reset where user evaluation and trials takes place earlier in the procurement process in order to enable an earlier contract award and systems acceptance test and production.

A key Government Furnished Equipment item is load carriage, a highly personal and subjective area that might affect a soldier's evaluation of the overall system by viewing its benefits largely through this one prism. Lt. Col. Levesque said, "We also took the load carriage off the table. Soldiers live and breathe by their load carriage and no two soldiers think the same think about load carriage. We, with the use of a jury of soldiers who had served in Afghanistan, came up with the best load carriage solution liked by most. The manufacturing specifications for that are on the internet now and that will be what bidders will use as the start point of their systems. We have essentially removed the soldier liking or disliking of the load carriage from the equation. The bid systems will be evaluated on a common platform.

The assessment will use a combination of mandatory and point rated criteria selection which is cost per point although the system is designed to ensure that maximizes effectiveness of the systems using value rather than seeking to drive contractors to the cheapest. Solutions will be limited by a maximum capped budget.

In December, the Army leadership asked the ISSP team to investigate why the programme would not be connected to the Land Command Support System (LCSS) backbone which is currently undergoing a major upgrade.

Lt. Col. Levesque said, "We had to convince the Army leadership that for us, connecting to the backbone is

ISSP PROGRAMME SCHEDULE	
Request for Proposal on MERX	Sep 2011
RFP Closes	Feb 2012
Bid Evaluation completed	June 2012
Contract Award for Definition	Feb 2013
Revised Preliminary Project Approval for Implementation	Dec 2013
Exercise options for Implementation	Jan 2014
Initial Operational Capability	Dec 2014

▶ a distant cousin. Really the first challenge for us is the systems on the soldier. If the system isn't adding a value to the soldier it is going to be left behind. Some countries have found this. They have fielding things with UORS and the soldier took parts of it deployed with it and the rest stayed behind because if it wasn't adding any value. Soldiers will carry weight if it adds value."

Lt. Col. Levesque sees the first challenge as systems on the soldier. The second challenge being the systems on the squad or section within the platoon, maybe within the company. The third challenge and for ISSP the second priority is connection to the backbone.

"I say this even though in Canada for some years now we have had a secret LAN on every vehicle so when commanders dismount, they go back 40 years. We understand this but the status quo is better at this point

than burdening the soldier with secret systems that are less flexible and don't have the bandwidth that data and voice throughput that soldiers need. The Army leadership is fine with this. We are willing to accept that the section commander can't talk to the gunner on his vehicle directly, unless we give him a Type 1 radio. That is the status quo and that is what we will keep for now."

"We accepted that we would have the status quo which would be combat net radio voice only for commander but this would all be in the SBU domain. But we had a compromise with the Army, with new direction we are looking at connecting into the backbone sooner and the solution is yet to be determined."

"There is essentially a change to our procurement strategy but we are requiring bidders to have some pedigree in working on secure systems to be able to

provide security services. That has been the change in our approach. It means that we [may] field fewer taskforces up front and work with our systems integrator up front to a design that is connectable to the LCSS backbone, and we will use that design to field to the requirement which is still six Task Forces for the main customer."

Once the winning bidder passes the qualification and passes the systems acceptance test, they will get firm order for 1600 ISS equipment sets in two TF with equipment with each TF having about 628 systems, the balance representing training stock and spares. The options for that would cover 2512 ISS set in four TFs with LCSS connectivity and as second options for 1600 X ISS (2 TF) upgrade to LCSS connectivity. ■



The ISSP programme may see more rapid access to the LCSS backbone than previously planned although the focus remains on suitable dismounted soldier networks
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