How can I access the RFP documentation?

Both the Guidance document and Response Template are available from https://dmtc.com.au/health-security-systems/

When is the submission deadline?

Responses to the RFP are required by close of business (5pm AEDT) Friday 17 December, 2021.

Is there an opportunity to discuss the central challenge and consequential proposal options with the panel prior to submission?

A group of technical experts will review the proposals. Typically, we do not engage with prospective submitters on an individual basis. However, you can submit any questions in relation to the RFP to hiss@dmtc.com.au at any time and answers will be progressively added to this FAQ document to ensure visibility for all respondents.

Can researchers use their data as a use case scenario, or would there be model data sets provided?

No model data sets will be provided. The expectation is that researchers will provide or collect their own data sets throughout the proposed project.

Are pre-existing relationships between academia and industry partners critical, or does the HISS promote new partnerships to address this call?

The key is partnerships, pre-existing or new. If you have a particular capability, but might not have all the partners or expertise required for the RFP, or you're interested in putting your name forward as a potential collaborative partner, please feel free to contact DMTC at hiss@dmtc.com.au with your details, and we may be able to facilitate some introductions to other organisations.

The human response to many pathogens tends to be unspecific, but therapeutics are often specific to a pathogen type. In light of this, why does this RFP place so much emphasis on sensing human physiology instead of sensing the pathogen?

We believe the HISS could be the best of both. The HISS challenge is really about on- or in-human sensing, and if it is possible to detect components of the pathogen circulating within the human, or the immunological response that the human makes for that particular pathogen. What is the best approach to detect a specific pathogen, is it a bacterial or viral infection, and what would give us an early indicator of exposure? We leave that open to you.

Is there a requirement for the partner group to include a Defence agency?

There is no requirement to have a partner related to Defence. However, Defence-related partners that can add some special context, or add a customer perspective, may strengthen your proposal.

Are there successful examples of this technology scope being used anywhere else in the world?

There has been a lot of success in environmental sensing, and there are organisations beginning work in this space, however not specifically focused on a pathogen in a military context. There has also been success in sensors diagnosing human physiological conditions such as cancer or diabetes. Respondents to this RFP may want to research examples of similar kinds of technologies. For example, the Rapid Analysis of Threat Exposure (RATE) program, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defense and Philips, which has developed a prediction of infection by integrating health data collected at hospitals from health wearables and hospital-based measurements with AI programs (https://www.usa.philips.com/a-w/about/news/archive/standard/news/press/2019/20191022-philips-and-the-us-department-of-defense-develop-breakthrough-technology-using-ai-to-identify-infection-more-than-48-hours-before-observable-symptoms.html). However, this particular challenge is unique, and complex. We are keen to see what innovative people are out there in the community that could potentially help us address this challenge.

What is the value proposition for a foreign entity to contribute to the project? Can their costs be reimbursed in some way?

The contract will stipulate that Commonwealth investment in the HISS Program cannot be provided to an overseas entity. However, if an overseas partner is able to bring a unique capability to a project, a decision between both DST Group and DMTC may be made on technology licensing agreements or staff exchanges in order to include a foreign entity.

If awarded, must investigators obtain baseline security clearance?
The intention is for HISS to be an unclassified program, and so security clearances are not necessary upon award. If that were to change as the project progressed to a higher Technology Readiness Level (TRL), this would be negotiated with the project team.

Can we publish our results from work within the HISS Program?
Yes. The expectation is that HISS will be unclassified. As such, both DMTC and DST Group encourage the publication of research coming from these projects.

Are clinical partners encouraged?
Yes, if they have meaningful contribution to make. Any sort of partnership that may be required to deliver the proposal is encouraged.

Is there an interest in pairing on body senses with environmental sensors?

There is potential for the HISS to be able to integrate with environmental sensors when it becomes a capability, but it is also expected to work in isolation as an independent sensing system.