



Insight #3.

Do's and Don'ts

When Responding to a Request For Information (RFI) in Innovation Procurement



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1. About us

Polish Platform for Homeland Security (PPHS), Corvers Procurement Services BV and CORVERS Greece Monoprosopi I.K.E. (collaboratively CORVERS), Kentro Meleton Asfaleias (KEMEA), and DIGINNOV-Digital Innovation Consulting S.R.L. (DIGINNOV) bring together their expertise to drive the success of the INTERCEPT project. PPHS coordinates the project, leveraging its strong connections with European security practitioners and stakeholders. KEMEA contributes experience in cross-border collaborations in innovation procurement, acting as Lead Procurer, coordinating the User Observatory Group (UOG) and the Group of Public Buyers, and defining the overall procurement strategy. DIGINNOV provides cutting-edge knowledge in technology evaluation, innovation needs, and security applications, ensuring alignment with user requirements and strategic goals. CORVERS specialises in innovation procurement and legal frameworks, providing expert guidance on Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) preparation and training for public buyers.

2. Executive summary

Public procurement can be used not only to purchase goods and services but also as a strategic tool to foster innovation, economic growth, achieve societal goals, and address complex policy challenges¹. The Open Market Consultation (OMC) constitutes a pivotal instrument in the preparatory phase of the procurement life cycle, established as a step in the [EAFIP Methodology](#) and having its legal basis in the 2014 EU Public Procurement Directives. OMCs enable contracting authorities to engage with the market (potential suppliers, researchers, and end users) not only before the formal launch of a procurement procedure, but also as a means to explore whether and how a procurement could be initiated, ensuring that public demand is aligned with what the market (assessment of the state-of-the-art analysis) can realistically offer or develop (mapping the innovation landscape, identifying promising technologies, and testing the viability of proposed use cases) and that the appropriate procurement strategy has been selected among others.

A central tool in the OMC phase is the Request for Information (RFI) questionnaire. A RFI is a structured method to collect input from potential suppliers, end users, and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. academic institutions). It aims to test the feasibility of the unmet need, identify existing or emerging solutions, and gather feedback on potential procurement strategies, including legal, ethical and/or technical barriers that might hinder participation in the potential follow-up procurement procedure. While participation in an RFI is voluntary and non-binding, the information obtained can be critical to shaping the tender documents in a way that promotes competition, innovation, as well as allowing a more efficient and realistic approach from the demand side.

The use of RFIs is particularly relevant in Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) and Public Procurement of Innovative solutions (PPI), where the available technologies and solutions are more often than not immature to address the unmet need(s) of the

¹ Oishee Kundu, Elvira Uyarra, Raquel Ortega-Argiles, Mayra M Tirado, Tasos Kitsos, Pei-Yu Yuan, Impacts of policy-driven public procurement: a methodological review, *Science and Public Policy*, Volume 52, Issue 1, February 2025, Pages 50–64, <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scae058>

relevant public buyer(s). However, despite its potential, the practice of conducting RFIs remains uneven across jurisdictions and sectors, and our perspective is based on prior experience with this best practice. Overall, some contracting authorities excel in using RFIs to stimulate meaningful dialogue, while others either do not use them at all or treat them as a mere formality, reducing their strategic value and minimising potential.

This insight explores the role of an RFI questionnaire within the OMC phase, with a particular focus on its structure, practical use, and value for both buyers and suppliers. It aims to provide actionable insights, guidance on the DOs and DON'Ts while responding to it and recommendations to promote more effective and transparent pre-procurement engagement.



3. Introduction: scope & objectives of INTERCEPT

In recent decades, the European Union has witnessed a growing number of security threats involving motor vehicles — from high-speed police chases and vehicle theft to deliberate vehicle-ramming attacks and terrorism-related incidents. These threats, often executed with alarming ease and speed, have underlined the urgent need for innovative tools that can help LEAs mitigate the risks posed by vehicles used as instruments of harm.

Motor vehicles continue to be exploited in a wide range of unlawful acts, including driving under the influence (DUI) offences, theft, violent crime, and targeted attacks. The combination of increasing frequency and rising operational complexity of such threats has outpaced the capabilities of existing technologies, calling for coordinated and technologically advanced responses at the EU level.

Traffic-related operations remain among the most hazardous duties for law enforcement officers. High-speed pursuits and roadside interventions frequently result in life-threatening outcomes. Data from France in 2019, for example, recorded over 22,000 police pursuits, which led to 5,789 accidents and 260 fatalities. Notably, 91% of these pursuits stemmed from non-violent offences, emphasising the disproportionate risks involved. Similar patterns are evident across other Member States, with stolen vehicles and DUI-related incidents continuing to challenge law enforcement and strain public safety systems.

The threat posed by vehicles has also taken a more insidious form in recent years: deliberate vehicle-ramming attacks. These tactics — characterised by the intentional use of vehicles to breach secured perimeters or cause mass casualties — are attractive to perpetrators due to their simplicity, low resource requirement, and high-impact potential. They have been deployed in terrorist plots, psychiatric crises, and opportunistic criminal acts. Attackers have, in some instances, used vehicles to gain access to sensitive sites before deploying further weapons or explosives, compounding the security risk.

Despite advances in commercial vehicle safety features — including collision avoidance systems and emergency braking — existing technologies do not seem to be designed to serve law enforcement needs in high-risk, real-time intervention scenarios. There remains a capability gap: no universal, scalable, and remotely operable solution currently exists to safely and effectively stop a moving vehicle without endangering lives or compromising property.

To bridge this gap, the INTERCEPT project was launched, co-funded by the European Union, to lay the groundwork for a potential PCP. Rather than directly procuring solutions, INTERCEPT aims to define and validate the operational, technical, legal, and ethical framework necessary for a future PCP targeting RVS technologies. The project brings together a consortium of practitioners, procurement experts, legal advisors, and technology analysts to engage with the market, end users, and policy stakeholders in a structured, strategic process.

The need for such a project was confirmed during consultations within the i-LEAD project. In February 2023, representatives of LEAs, procurement professionals, and subject matter experts collectively noted the absence of a universal, reliable, and lawful RVS solution. Their findings helped solidify the case for deeper market exploration and structured preparation, underlining the importance of aligning any future procurement with both user needs and legal constraints across the EU.

The project's broader objectives include enhancing cross-border cooperation among public buyers, promoting responsible innovation, and improving the overall readiness of public procurement systems to address emerging security challenges.



4. Request for Information questionnaires

4.1. What is an RFI questionnaire and why is it important?

The RFI questionnaire plays a central role in the OMC phase, as mentioned above, serving as a structured method for gathering market intelligence not only before the formal launch of a procurement procedure, but also to support public buyers in considering whether and how to initiate a procurement, including options for innovation procurement. RFIs are widely used in innovation procurement, particularly within PCP and PPI, but the tools used, their structure, length and overall content are not set in stone, but rely on the public buyers' discretion. The approach presented below is a product of many years of experience, arising as a best practice.

RFIs are considered non-binding instruments. Participation in an RFI does not create legal obligations for either the contracting authority or the respondents. Instead, it allows both sides to explore the landscape of needs and potential solutions in an open, exploratory setting. Despite their informal nature, RFIs must be carried out in compliance with the core principles of EU public procurement law; namely, transparency, equal treatment, and non-discrimination. All interested parties should have fair access to the consultation, and no supplier should gain an unfair advantage through their participation in it.

From a strategic perspective, the RFI is a key tool for aligning procurement objectives with realistic market capabilities, especially in fields where technological development is still evolving.

It indicatively allows contracting authorities to:

- Validate the state-of-the-art analysis results
- Validate the feasibility of their functional or performance-based needs,
- Assess the maturity and availability of existing or near-to-market solutions,
- Understand supplier interest and capacity,
- Identify legal, ethical, technical, or operational barriers to participation.

At the same time, it provides suppliers with an opportunity to:

- Gain early insight into upcoming procurement opportunities,
- Highlight the potential of innovative or emerging solutions,
- Express concerns about contractual terms, technical specifications, or IPR allocation models,
- Signal willingness to participate, alone or as part of a consortium.

The strategic value of the RFI lies in its ability to inform better procurement design while maintaining an open and competitive environment. When used effectively, it improves the quality of the tender documentation, reduces the risk of failure or low participation, and increases the chances of achieving value for money and broader goals through procurement.

4.2. What is the structure and content of a typical RFI questionnaire?

RFI for suppliers

This version of the questionnaire is designed to collect detailed information from companies, SMEs, research organisations, and other potential solution developers.

It includes the following key sections:

- General Information

Basic organisational details (name, size, location, contact information).

- Experience and expertise

Information about previous experience with similar domains or technologies relevant to the INTERCEPT challenge (e.g. monitoring systems, AI, health-tech, cybersecurity).

- Specific questions regarding the challenge of a project and its requirements, including existing or pipeline solutions related to it, their Technology Readiness Level (TRL), the potential room for innovation, interoperability or applicable standards, estimated timeframes and budget for the procurement, etc.

- Feedback on Proposed needs

Insights into whether the functional or performance-based requirements described in the OMC documents are feasible and how they align with the supplier's roadmap.

- Barriers and collaboration

Respondents are invited to indicate a) potential risks or participation barriers (technical, legal, ethical or financial), b) their willingness to collaborate or form consortia, and/or c) comments and remarks on IPR, licensing schemes, etc.

RFI for end users

This complementary survey targets the needs owners—such as public authorities, or operational end users—whose feedback is vital to ensure that the procurement reflects real-world requirements.

It includes the following key sections:

- General Information

Type of organisation, name of the respondent/contact person, country and contact details.

- Operational needs and challenges

Description of existing gaps, operational bottlenecks, or unmet needs that the future solution should address in the context of a project.

- Technical expectations, priorities and constraints

High-level input on desired functionalities, requirements, key performance indicators, and adoption barriers due to national legal constraints.

- Feedback on scope and use cases

Assessment of whether the preliminary use cases or needs proposed by the contracting authority are relevant, clear, and complete.

- Legal, ethical or societal considerations

Expression of concerns regarding legal hindrances, ethical concerns about the potential solutions, the public's perception of them, issues with accountability, liability and transparency, etc.

- Feasibility, procurement and testing



Expression of interest to participate actively in the piloting or testing of the developed solution(s), issues with certification or third-party validation, budgetary constraints and/or overall suggestions.

Use of the EU Survey Platform

The [EU Survey](#) tool is particularly suitable for RFI dissemination in cross-border and EU-funded projects like INTERCEPT.

The advantages of using the EU Survey platform, coming from our prior experience on the matter, include its **accessibility**, as stakeholders across the EU can respond online without burdensome administrative barriers; its **standardisation**, which ensures that responses are collected in a consistent format, making comparison and analysis more straightforward; its strong **security and privacy** features, as the platform complies with EU data protection standards; and its **flexibility**, offering a range of question types, from multiple choice to open text and conditional logic, enabling the collection of both quantitative and qualitative insights.

The INTERCEPT project's dual RFI approach illustrates how contracting authorities can design targeted yet complementary surveys, ensuring that both supply potential and demand-side needs are thoroughly explored ahead of launching a formal procurement procedure.

4.3. RFIs in the context of INTERCEPT

INTERCEPT issued two RFIs questionnaires through the EU Survey platform; one for [suppliers](#) and one for [end-users](#). The RFI for suppliers explored several dimensions: company profiles, TRLs of relevant solutions, key performance features such as tracking or neutralisation capabilities, safety mechanisms, IPR status, legal limitations, and budget/time estimates for each use case. The RFI for end users gathered insight into the operational relevance of the proposed use cases, technical expectations, communication and integration requirements, legal or ethical limitations, and interest

in future piloting or testing. Together, these surveys provided a rich evidence base from both the supply and demand perspectives.

INTERCEPT
Request for Information Questionnaire for End Users



INTERCEPT: Innovation Procurement of Advanced Technologies for Safe Remote Vehicle Stopping by Law Enforcement

This survey is part of the Open Market Consultation (OMC) of the INTERCEPT project. It should provide the INTERCEPT Consortium with feedback from the market about the challenge concerning enhancing the capabilities of European law enforcement authorities and provide them with information about effective means to safely stop vehicles remotely. The OMC document, to which this questionnaire is an annex, can be found on the project's website (<https://intercept-horizon.eu>).

End users are invited to answer all the questions in this survey (one survey per company). The results will be considered when drafting the tender documents for the future PCP. The deadline to submit your response is 23 May 2025. In case further input is needed, a deadline extension may be announced on the INTERCEPT project website.

Please note that taking part in this survey is not a prerequisite for participation in the future PCP and does not give any advantage to any end user. INTERCEPT will ensure transparency, openness, and equal treatment of all economic operators. All information provided in the questionnaire will be anonymised, summarised and published online in English on the project's website.

Your personal data will be collected, processed, stored, and used by the INTERCEPT consortium with the sole purpose of gathering information from the market within the framework of the INTERCEPT project. Personal data will be treated as strictly confidential according to the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation 2018/879 of the European Parliament and of the Council - GDPR). You may exercise your right to access your personal data and the right to rectify such data by contacting: contact@intercept-horizon.eu.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Figure 1: RFI for End Users

INTERCEPT
Request for Information Questionnaire for Technology Providers



INTERCEPT: Innovation Procurement of Advanced Technologies for Safe Remote Vehicle Stopping by Law Enforcement

This survey is part of the Open Market Consultation (OMC) of the INTERCEPT project. It should provide the INTERCEPT Consortium with feedback from the market about the challenge concerning enhancing the capabilities of European law enforcement authorities and provide them with information about effective means to safely stop vehicles remotely. The OMC document, to which this questionnaire is an annex, can be found on the project's website (<https://intercept-horizon.eu>).

Technology providers are invited to answer all the questions in this survey (one survey per company). The results will be considered when drafting the tender documents for the future PCP. The deadline to submit your response is 23 May 2025. In case further input is needed, a deadline extension may be announced on the INTERCEPT project website.

Please note that taking part in this survey is not a prerequisite for participation in the future PCP and does not give any advantage to any technology provider. INTERCEPT will ensure transparency, openness, and equal treatment of all economic operators. All information provided in the questionnaire will be anonymised, summarised and published online in English on the project's website.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Figure 2: RFI for Suppliers

The preliminary results of the OMC activities were published in a consolidated report on 30 May 2025. This interim document summarised anonymised input received through the RFIs and webinars. It provided an overview of technological readiness, perceived implementation barriers, legal and ethical considerations, and innovation gaps. The report identified trends in supplier responses, including the use of radio frequency (RF)-based engine neutralisation, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) surveillance and tracking, AI-driven behaviour detection, and mechanical interception systems. It also reflected end users' prioritisation of public safety, real-time control, and the need for solutions that minimise disruption and align with legal frameworks. This report served as a feedback tool ahead of the main OMC event and allowed vendors to better align their contributions. It also provided an updated list and description of the security use cases, which were refined from six to three.



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<p>4. Summary of the replies to the RFI questionnaire</p> <p>The Request for Information surveys are part of the OMC of the INTERCEPT project. Two surveys were created, including the targeted questions for technology providers and end users.</p> <p>The RFI questionnaire collected input from technology providers on solutions for the remote and safe stopping of vehicles. It focused on company profiles, existing or emerging technologies, and their suitability for six predefined high-risk use cases. Providers were asked to describe key technical features, safety mechanisms, development timelines, and readiness levels. The questionnaire also explored innovation compared to the current state-of-the-art, use of patents or standards, and any technical or operational barriers. Additional input on risks and support needed for development was also requested.</p> <p>On the other hand, the RFI questionnaire for end users aimed to understand operational needs, technical expectations, and legal considerations related to remote vehicle-stopping solutions. Respondents were asked to share organisational details, the frequency and context of high-risk incidents, and rank the relevance of the six INTERCEPT use cases. Input was gathered on current tools, critical technical requirements, preferred environments for testing, and integration needs. The questionnaire also explored legal, ethical, and societal concerns, as well as end users' willingness to engage in testing, certification needs, and procurement constraints.</p> <p>The (preliminary) results summarised below will be considered when drafting the tender documents for the future PCP.</p> <p>After completing the analysis of the responses, the INTERCEPT Consortium will publish a final OMC report, scheduled for release on 4 July 2024. The purpose of this report is to inform the market and relevant stakeholders ahead of the upcoming e-pitching events and to support transparent, broad-based information exchange. All responses received through the EU Survey have been fully anonymised. As such, the report will present only aggregated findings and summarised insights derived from the collected data. The final OMC report will be made publicly available on the official INTERCEPT project website.</p>	<p>5. Conclusions</p> <p>The INTERCEPT OMC engaged both end users and technology providers across Europe to gather insights into current operational challenges and the technological landscape related to remote vehicle-stopping solutions. The consultation attracted contributions from public security authorities and private sector innovators, providing a diverse and informative view of needs, capabilities, and constraints.</p> <p>End users emphasised that high-risk vehicle incidents occur frequently, particularly in urban environments. Among the six proposed use cases, scenarios involving high-speed pursuits and vehicle ramming attacks were deemed most relevant. Respondents noted that current intervention tools are largely absent or limited to pursuit contexts, highlighting a significant operational gap. Effectiveness, response time, and minimal public disruption were ranked as the top priorities for any future solution. Legal, ethical, and public trust considerations—especially relating to surveillance, proportionality, and safety—were also identified as essential factors to address in system development and deployment.</p> <p>Technology providers reported a variety of innovative solutions in progress or under development, including adhesive-based tracking devices, autonomous UAV systems, remote RF-based engine disablement tools, and integrated perception and control platforms. Most providers confirmed awareness of existing technological options but noted considerable room for advancement beyond the current state of the art. Key areas of innovation include AI-driven behaviour prediction, GNSS-independent tracking, secure communication in complex environments, and miniaturisation of intervention technologies. Providers also cited practical challenges such as system reliability in diverse conditions, legal authorisations for use, and the need for standardisation across different vehicle types and deployment scenarios.</p> <p>There was a broad consensus among participants on the importance of interoperability, user control flexibility and compliance with data protection and national regulations. While several providers expressed readiness to participate in prototyping and validation, others noted that further clarifications on technical</p>
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Figure 3: Excerpts from the preliminary OMC report.

The final version of the [OMC Report](#) was published on 18 July 2025 and is accessible in the project's website for further exploration of its findings.

4.4. DO's and DON'Ts Checklists

To ensure that the use of RFIs during the OMC phase is effective and meaningful for both the demand and the supply side, they must be approached with clarity, honesty, and a shared understanding of their purpose. While the process is non-binding, the quality of input provided can significantly influence the design and success of the subsequent procurement (e.g. through the finetuning of the tender documents or the selection of the procurement strategy).

The following tables will provide a practical guide of DOs and DON'Ts for respondents, helping to promote productive engagement, avoid common pitfalls, and uphold the principles of transparency, equal treatment, fairness, and confidentiality.



For End Users (e.g. public servants, public organisations, domain experts)	
DOs	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Answer the RFI questionnaire with precision, providing a clear description of your existing needs and day-to-day challenges, in the context of a project, that the potential upcoming solution(s) should address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Don't use overly technical jargon that potential suppliers may not understand or only high-level experts could comprehend correctly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be honest about pre-existing constraints of any sort (e.g. infrastructure, interoperability issues, national regulations, strict timeframes, or budgetary concerns). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Don't overpromise your ability to adopt disruptive solutions if your organisation is not ready in any aspect (e.g. financial, technical, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Express the preferences of your organisation in functional terms (what the desired solution should do, not how it should do it). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Don't overprescribe specific technologies, brands, or methods in such a way that open and fair competition are artificially narrowed down, directly or indirectly favouring certain suppliers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participate actively in interviews, workshops, or surveys during the preparatory phase of a project, since your input directly or indirectly shapes the future tender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Don't assume others will take care of filling in the questionnaire or give their opinion instead of you. Everyone's insights and input are valuable at this stage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ask for clarification if any part of the RFI is unclear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Don't speculate or give opinions on suppliers' capabilities, focus solely on your perspective as an end-user and only on the things that you are certain of.

For Suppliers (e.g. SMEs, technology providers, innovators, research institutes)	
DOs	DON'Ts
✓ Provide a realistic picture of your current and near-future capabilities and expertise.	✓ Don't provide false information of any sort.
✓ Clarify/specify the TRL of your solution(s), if possible.	✓ Don't exaggerate or oversell unproven technologies.
✓ Provide clear justification to properly explain your input and points in a concise manner.	✓ Don't offer off-topic products or services just to be included. Try to participate only if you truly have valuable knowledge or input for a particular project.
✓ Share constructive feedback on the feasibility of the requirements from different perspectives.	✓ Don't share confidential information of your organisation or any other third party.
✓ Help the contracting authorities achieve their objectives by cross-checking the results of their state-of-the-art and market analysis as well as providing information relevant for the drafting of tender documents in the most fair and realistic way.	✓ Don't provide generic or too broad answers (e.g. everything is possible, yes I can, etc.).
✓ Respect all the predetermined deadlines and respond in full to all relevant questions.	✓ Don't submit a partial, ambiguous or vague reply, since it may mislead or confuse the public buyers.
✓ Flag any anticipated barriers to participation (e.g. IPRs allocation, liability terms, timelines, budgetary limitations, legal or technical hindrances, follow-up commercialisation).	✓ Don't assume the participation in the OMC or the RFI questionnaire will automatically lead to future Call for Tenders and/or contracts.
	✓ Don't use the RFI or any OMC activity as an opportunity to "lobby" with the contracting authorities or the members of a project's consortium.
	✓ Don't ask insider information on future procurement plans or preferential treatment.

All in all, the RFI should be treated as a mutual learning opportunity for both the contracting authorities and the market.

5. Conclusions

Conclusively, RFI questionnaires are a truly useful and strategic tool at the disposal of any public buyer during the OMC phase, which have become an essential practice in strategic and innovation-friendly public procurement. When properly designed and deployed, RFIs offer contracting authorities' valuable insights into the state of the market, the maturity of emerging technologies, and the feasibility of the procurement requirements and overall challenge. At the same time, this practice gives suppliers and end users an early voice in shaping upcoming tenders, fostering transparency, alignment, and mutual understanding.

Although RFIs are voluntary and non-binding, they must be conducted in a way that fully respects the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, and transparency. Tools such as the EU Survey platform have facilitated more inclusive, accessible, and structured engagement, as illustrated by the INTERCEPT project's dual approach targeting both suppliers and end users.

However, the value of RFIs ultimately depends on the quality of participation and the willingness of all parties to contribute openly and constructively. Contracting authorities must ensure clarity of purpose, realistic expectations, and meaningful follow-up, while respondents must engage sincerely and responsibly. By treating the RFI not as a mere administrative step but as a strategic instrument of dialogue, public buyers and market actors alike can significantly improve the outcome of innovation procurement.